

Algerian rebels kill rival guerrilla chief — paper

PARIS (R) — Members of Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA) killed the leader of a rival rebel group in an attack in the southwest of the country, Algerian newspapers said on Sunday. Said Makhloufi, a former army officer and a founder of an Islamist guerrilla in Algeria, was killed by a GIA group in his stronghold near the border with Morocco. La Tribune newspaper reported. Makhloufi, 43, was leader of the Islamic State Movement, which was set up soon after the authorities cancelled a general election in 1992 in which the now outlawed Islamic Salvation Front had taken a commanding lead. The newspaper did not say when Makhloufi was killed, and there was no immediate comment from rebel groups or the authorities.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي.

Jordan to respect U.N. travel ban on Iraqi officials

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan will abide by the new U.N. Security Council resolution banning travel by certain Iraqi officials and military officers, a senior Jordanian official told AFP Sunday. "Jordan is bound by international resolutions and will respect Resolution 1137," the senior official said on condition of anonymity. Jordan has been an obligatory port of call for all Iraqi officials travelling abroad since the imposition of the international embargo on Iraq in 1991. Banned from travelling by plane, Iraqi officials are obliged to make the 950-kilometre road journey from Baghdad to Amman before flying on from there to their eventual destination. But Jordan "has yet to receive from the U.N. the list of Iraqi officials banned from leaving their country," the senior official stressed.

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Attack against Iraq will be extremely destabilising — Regent

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan Sunday said the will of the international community in the U.N.-Iraq crisis must be respected, but warned that the use of force as a "blunt instrument" would reflect poorly on the United States.

"As far as the use of force is concerned, those of us living in the area know, [as] friends of the U.S. and friends of the West, the slowing-up of the peace process means that the American image is not what it might be," the Crown Prince said in an interview aired by the BBC.

When asked about possible outcomes of the recent diplomatic efforts by Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and U.S. President Bill Clinton, Prince Hassan replied that the possibility for a diplomatic breakthrough existed against the

backdrop of the current Doha economic and upcoming Tehran Islamic conferences, but added that a "flash conflict" could also erupt.

"The timing of the crisis is rather interesting, because if there is going to be an attack against Iraq, against the background of these two major regional meetings, and if there is going to be an outcry, and presumably an anti-Western outcry, it is going to be extremely destabilising," he said.

On Jordan's role in the crisis and any misunderstanding of the Kingdom's political position in the region, Prince Hassan said while Jordan serves as a "listening post" between Iraq and the West, the country is "caught in the middle ground."

"We are the middle ground between oil on the one side and Israel on the other. So I don't think it is a misunderstanding of our role, it is a misunderstanding of what responsibilities we have to shoulder, what interests we have to further," he stated.

In his interview, the Crown Prince discussed other issues related to the current U.N.-Iraq crisis.

Following is the full text of the interview:

Q: The United States has begun series of intense diplomatic contacts with Arab countries about what to do next in the current crisis with Iraq. And one of the first people President Clinton met was His Majesty King Hussein. What was said? Did the Americans try to apply any pressure on you?

A: A very interesting development is that in this crisis you have a parallel situation between intense diplomacy on the one side, and the obvious presence of tremendous force in the

region on the other. But as far as Jordan is concerned, our position is clear: the respect for international will has to be there. But at the same time, as far as the use of force is concerned, those of us living in the area know, friends of the United States and friends of the West, the slowing up of the peace process has meant that the American image is not what it might be. So the use of force as a blunt instrument, I don't think, would reflect well at all on the United States at this time.

Q: Was Jordan asked to play in any sense a mediating role in this crisis?

A: Let me put it this way. Jordan is a listening post by definition. The visit of Tariq Aziz on his way to the United States, the United Nations, his use of the opportunity to speak to us on the Iraqi position more clear-

ly than he has ever done in the past gave us an opportunity to pass on his message to Western diplomats. But as far as the role of the U.S., the U.N., and the superpowers five in the context of Iraq is a very direct conversation which we seem to all share to a less or greater extent.

Q: But should Jordan be playing a more assertive mediating role? Should it be taking that role more openly in its own right?

A: I think in many ways, as you say, His Majesty was among the first Arab visitors to call on President Clinton. Quiet diplomacy at this time, constructive thinking is what is required. We still live the legacy of having been the principal victim of the Gulf war, bar the two countries directly affected, Kuwait and Iraq. And I think that we have suffered enough.

Q: When Tariq Aziz makes his way back to Iraq via Jordan, will the King or you be meeting him and of inspection team. And, of course, the position as we know is pretty clear.

Madeline Albright said very clearly that defiance is not a road to salvation and recalcitrance can't be rewarded.

Q: But should Jordan be playing a more assertive mediating role? Should it be taking that role more openly in its own right?

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Q: When Tariq Aziz makes his way back to Iraq via Jordan, will the King or you be meeting him and

what message will you have to him then to take back to Baghdad?

A: Well, clearly again we will be able to assess by that time what reactions, both the United States and indeed among the five permanent members of the Security Council, (we have). He will have visited Arab capitals and (Jordan) before he goes back to Iraq. It will be a good opportunity for us to evaluate, to fulfill that listening post role.

Q: Did you understand his sense of frustration about what full compliance means and what will those resolutions have and is there light at the end of the tunnel?

A: I think there have been seven years of sanctions clearly and I won't say that I understand the background as I said. And this time he has spoken to me more clearly than any other time but we

haven't been a party to the numerous crises that we have lived over the last seven years. And I want to say very clearly that one thing we cannot understand is why the parties cannot address the main issue which for us is the plight of the Iraqi people.

Q: How desperate you think is that plight?

A: According to U.N. agencies, let's look at the humanitarian face of the U.N., we are talking about 5,000 children under the age of five dying every month as opposed to an average of 400 in 1989.

Q: Do you think there is any sense of blame in this crisis, does it lie with Iraq, does it lie with the U.N., does it lie with the U.S.?

A: I think that the responsibility lies on all parties in

(Continued on page 7)

MENA conference opens in Doha with Jordan, Qatar blasting Israel

Combined agency dispatches

ARAB LEADERS blasted Israel on Sunday at the start of a U.S.-backed Middle East economic conference meant to draw their peoples together.

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Thani, sitting next to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, lashed out at Israel in an address opening an economic conference in the Gulf state of Qatar which Israel is attending.

"The peace process... is, unfortunately, now passing through a critical phase where it is impeded by the intransigence of the Israeli government and its unjustifiable backing down on the accords it has concluded," the Emir said.

Sheikh Hamad said Israeli policies were exposing the region to a danger of unpredictable dimensions.

Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani, the highest-ranking visitor from an Arab state to attend the conference, also criticised Israel despite his country's having signed an agreement with Israel hours before to set up a joint U.S. free-trade zone in Jordan (see separate story).

He said tension on the Israel-Lebanon border was reviving "memories of war" while Arabs and Israelis had a

long way to go to achieve regional development.

Mr. Anani slammed Israel's control of the Palestinian economy as "a clear violation of the basis of Jordanian-Israeli (peace) accords", stressing that liberating the Palestinian economy "is a necessary demand to open the channels of co-operation."

Israel, which was not represented at the head table, has banned Palestinian workers from entering Israel following suicide attacks, a move that Palestinian labourers assail as collective punishment.

Like Qatar's leader, the Jordanian minister accused Israel of failing to honour peace accords. He stressed the need for progress in the Jewish state's talks with Lebanon and Syria.

Fending off the criticism, Israeli Industry and Trade Minister Nathan Sharansky said he took more issue with those who boycotted the conference than with those who came and denounced Israel.

"I prefer those who come here and try to develop economic relations in order that that will eventually push ahead political relations and saying all the words of criticism which they believe is just — and of course I can believe that it is unjust — to those who simply don't come here," Mr. Sharansky told Reuters.

Some 2,000 participants are



Qataris listen Sunday to the opening speeches at the MENA conference. The economic conference is taking place in a newly constructed \$16-million conference hall and is attended by 64 countries (Reuters photo)

attending the conference from 66 countries, but only a handful of Arab states are attending, including Jordan, Kuwait, Oman and Tunisia. But they have mostly sent low-ranking delegations.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan will address the final session of the conference, Petra news agency, quoted the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, as saying when he received Dr. Anani.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright praised

Qatar for staging the forum despite the boycott by Arab states, and emphasised that the gathering was "not a favour to any particular nation."

She also warned that the peace process was in "danger", adding that "it would be helpful for the peace process if all the leaders of the region would keep the commitments they have made."

Ms. Albright said she was cutting short her stay in Doha for a diplomatic mission in the

region because of the crisis, while the U.S. is beefing up its military presence in the Gulf by sending a second aircraft carrier (see separate story).

Most Arab League members, including the Palestinian National Authority, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have boycotted the fourth annual MENA conference to protest against what they see as Israel's

(Continued on page 12)

Jordan, Israel sign accord on Irbid Industrial Zone

Only products exported through Irbid allowed in U.S. free of tariffs — Mulki

From Ghaila Alal in Doha

AN AGREEMENT to designate Irbid as a "Qualifying Industrial Zone" was signed between Jordan and Israel during the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference which started here on Sunday.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Trade and Industry Hani Mulki and his Israeli counterpart Nathan Sharansky at a ceremony witnessed by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who said after the signing that "approving Irbid the first qualifying industrial zone ever, reflects the U.S. commitment to supporting the partners in the Middle East peace process."

Ms. Albright added that this agreement "demonstrates America's support not simply by words, but with concrete actions" calling the agreement a "milestone in the implementation of peace and a tangible demonstration of the benefits of the peace process."

"This illustrates the validity of the vision that underlines the Doha summit, which is that people of the region can derive mutual benefits through joint projects and cross border cooperation."

She said the U.S. hopes to continue to work with Jordan and Israel in similar projects in the future like the one Jordan and Israel started earlier this week when for the first time flights carrying passengers bound for Israel landed in Aqaba inaugurating a pilot project for the peace airport

serving both countries.

"These events demonstrate that the positive effects of the peace process continue to be felt and the wheels of cooperation continue to turn. This is good news for Israel and Jordan, good news for the region and for all who wish to see a just and lasting and comprehensive Middle East peace," Ms. Albright added.

A statement by the American press centre here said "this is part of U.S. policy to support peace in many trou-

bled parts of the world and is the theme and basis of conferences such as this. Cooperation of this kind is vital to the development of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region."

Sunday's agreement also aims at creating more than 5,000 job opportunities in Jordan within the coming three years, facilitating technology transfer, eliminating trade barriers, as well as

(Continued on page 7)



United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright observes as Trade and Industry Minister Hani Al Mulki and Israel's Industry and Trade Minister Nathan Sharansky sign a trade agreement moments before the opening session of the MENA conference Sunday (Reuters photo)

Iraq says not seeking confrontation with U.S.; Russia, France commit to help resolve crisis

Kuwait declares opposition to military action against Iraq

Combined agency dispatches

PRESIDENT SADDAM Hussein said Sunday that Iraq is not seeking a confrontation with the United States and wants to reach a solution to the U.N. crisis through dialogue, the official INA news agency reported.

"Iraq is not looking for confrontation with the American administration and if it is possible to reach through dialogue a solution in which the Security Council fulfils its commitments towards Iraq, we will be happy," President Hussein told a Council of Ministers meeting in Baghdad.

"We do not accept any

manoeuvres outside this framework, which Iraq explained in its letter to the U.N. Security Council" on Nov. 6, Iraqi television quoted Mr. Hussein as saying, without elaborating on the contents of the letter.

"However, if others act rashly and insist on another way other than dialogue, they will be held fully responsible," he said.

Iraq has been bracing for possible military action by the United States following Baghdad's expulsion Thursday of Americans working for the U.N. Commission (UNSCOM) on disarming Iraq.

The U.S. has received a commitment from Russia to use its special relationship

with Iraq to intervene in the current crisis over U.N. weapons inspectors, U.S. officials said.

Washington also made a similar appeal to France but whether Paris is prepared to do that is "less clear," one official told reporters.

"We all recognise that the Russians and the French have had an influence over Saddam Hussein's behaviour in the past," State Department spokesman James Rubin said on Sunday. "The idea is that they would be in the best position to convey to him the steeliness of the will of the international community to resolve this problem."

This point was discussed in two telephone calls over

the last two days with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov and one with French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, he said. Ms. Albright also spoke on Saturday with British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. President Clinton spoke with Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

"The focus of the president's phone call and her phone calls have been that the French and Russians specifically have a unique relationship with Iraq, and that it would be best for all of us if they would exploit that unique relationship and convince him to reverse course," said a senior official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Iraq on Sunday boasted of international opposition to any U.S. attack over its showdown with the United Nations as U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright launched a whirlwind diplomatic offensive against Iraq, telling Middle East allies President Saddam Hussein had lied, delayed, obstructed and tried to deceive for six years since the Gulf war.

"When the Gulf war ended six years ago, the world spelled out in United Nations Security Council resolutions what Iraq had to do to return to the family of nations," Ms. Albright said at the start of a three-day economic conference

(Continued on page 7)

Parliament to convene Nov. 29 with five blocs in the forming

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Deputies are jockeying to form blocs in the newly-elected Parliament, scheduled to convene in two weeks.

The well-informed Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported Sunday that it "has learned" that the first four-month ordinary session of Parliament will be convened on Nov. 29, a couple of days earlier than parliamentarians predicted

last week. Before then, His Majesty King Hussein will appoint the 40-member Upper House, whose four-year mandate ends on Nov. 22.

The 13th Parliament is set to be divided into five blocs, but intense negotiations are still under way and the final composition of each bloc will be clear only later this week, deputies said yesterday.

Two blocs of independents are being finalised, under the leadership of

former Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and former Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Strour.

When finalised, these two blocs will join a third coalition of independents, the 14-man-strong National Bloc, announced earlier this week by spokesperson Mohammad Abu Hdeib (Amman's 5th District).

The pro-government National Constitutional

(Continued on page 7)

Peace process has reached a dead end — Arafat

CAIRO (AFP) — Palestinian National Authority (PNA) President Yasser Arafat met here Sunday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to discuss urgent means to save the Middle East peace process, which he said had reached a "dead end."

The talks focused mainly on the redeployment of Israeli troops in the occupied territories and Jewish settlement construction, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said.

"There are many suggestions and contacts on these two key issues and on what the United States can do to save Israeli-Palestinian peace talks," Mr. Musa told reporters after the meeting.

"Time is running quickly," Mr. Musa said, adding that Egypt will pursue its contacts over the next few weeks.

Mr. Arafat, who arrived in Egypt from Bern, Switzerland, told reporters at Cairo Airport he would "examine with Mr. Mubarak ways of saving the peace process

which has reached a dead end."

The Palestinian leader also briefed Mr. Mubarak on his talks Saturday in Bern with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, which followed a meeting she had on Friday in London with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"There have been some gaps but also some openings," Ms. Albright said at a joint news conference with Mr. Arafat. But she refused to say what

kind of progress had been made.

"President Arafat told President Mubarak of his appreciation for the American role and for what he heard from Mrs. Albright but he is still pessimistic over the situation in general," Mr. Musa said.

Mr. Musa called on the United States to step up efforts, adding that there is a "consensus in Russia and the European Union" against Israeli policies.

"Egypt's refusal to go to the

economic conference in Doha was a clear message to the Israeli government and to everyone concerned that this situation cannot persist and will lead to no good," Mr. Musa added.

A senior U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, has said that even if the Israelis and Palestinians put their ideas for a final settlement on the table their ideas would be so far apart as to make negotiations impossible.

Mr. Arafat could suffer a stroke or could gradually lose control over his speech due to the injuries he suffered in the crash, but Dr. Kurdi made no mention at the time of Parkinson's disease.

Palestinian officials accuse Israel of fomenting the health rumours to undermine Mr. Arafat, but the questions have sparked fears of a battle for succession inside the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) if he dies or is incapacitated.

The leading Arab daily Al Hayat reported last week that the heads of Arafat's various security forces are already jockeying for position in a post-Arafat self-rule authority, warning that the competition could turn into "an explosion."

The two heads of Preventative Security, Jibril Rajub in the West Bank and Mohammad Dahlan in the Gaza Strip, are arming supporters and making political alliances in expectation of a succession battle, the paper said.

Mr. Arafat's frail appearance has led to an atmosphere of "Kremlin-watching" over his health, raising the anger of Palestinian officials, for whom the question — and the more sensitive question of who would succeed the 69-year-old veteran PNA leader — is a taboo subject.

Herz Shabtai, a leading neurologist at Tel Aviv's Ichilov Hospital, told AFP that trembling hands, chin and lip, such as that visible on Mr. Arafat, are symptoms for the onset of Parkinson's.

"But this is complete speculation, based only on seeing him on television," he said.

Mr. Arafat and his officials have repeatedly denied rumours of illness, fuelled in recent months by public appearances in which he was visibly trembling in his hands and lower lip and seemed pale, tired and agitated.

But Mr. Arafat was pressed once more on the subject by a journalist during a press conference with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Bern on Saturday.

Told that he appeared trembling, his eyes watery and glazed, and his speech slow and stuttering, Mr. Arafat blamed lack of sleep, overwork and a plane crash in the Libyan desert in 1992.

"I have had this problem since the aircraft crash," he said of the trembling. "And also I am tired since I haven't slept these last three days. I had

to get up at five o'clock this morning to meet with Mrs. Albright."

A smiling Arafat raised a laugh by thanking the journalist for his concern about his health, but his aides were visibly angered by the questions.

Speculation among doctors has focused on Parkinson's disease, a disorder which destroys brain cells and over time can lead to violent and irrational behaviour.

But a senior U.S. official who attended the meetings in Bern said he had noticed no difference in the performance of Arafat, who is notorious for working a marathon schedule of long travel, endless meetings and little sleep.

A year ago, Ashraf Al Kurdi, now Jordanian health minister, who treated Mr. Arafat after his 1992 plane crash, was quoted in the press seemingly predicting the Palestinian leader would develop symptoms similar to those he now shows.

Dr. Kurdi reportedly warned

ANKARA (R) — A northern Iraqi Kurdish faction said on Sunday that its Turkish-backed rival had renewed an attempt to push it back to earlier ceasefire lines.

"At seven this morning a new offensive began against Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) positions around Rawandiz near the Iranian border," PUK spokesman Shazad Saib told Reuters.

He said the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) assault had been backed by Turkish air and artillery bombardments in a bid to drive the

PUK back to ceasefire lines broken last month.

"The Turks shell and bomb and later the KDP and Turkish infantry and tanks move in," he said. He was unable to give casualty figures.

"Turkey officially warned the PUK to withdraw to the earlier ceasefire lines. We didn't and now they are fulfilling their promises," said Mr. Saib.

Turkey says that its heavy military presence in northern Iraq is designed to strike at its own separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) which uses strongholds in the mountainous region to launch attacks on Turkey.

The KDP was not immediately available for comment but has said its aim is to reverse PUK gains made in October fighting.

Northern Iraq has been outside Baghdad's control since the end of the 1991 Gulf war and is the scene of sporadic fighting between the rival Kurdish groups.

A U.S.-led air force based in southeastern Turkey regularly patrols the area to enforce a no-fly zone imposed on Iraqi planes in northern Iraq.

Northern Iraqi Kurd faction says Turk-backed rival renewed attack

TEL AVIV (AP) — The convicted brother of Yitzhak Rabin's assassin filed suit Sunday against a Shin Bet informant he claims entrapped him into helping plan the murder.

Hagai Amir was convicted in Oct. 1996 of conspiring to kill the prime minister, and sentenced to 12 years in prison. His brother Yigal is serving a life sentence for

shooting three bullets into Rabin as he left a peace rally in Tel Aviv in Nov. 1995.

The \$1.4 million civil suit in Tel Aviv district court is the first against Avishai Raviv since the government last week released sections of a secret report confirming that Raviv, a right-wing agitator and friend of Yigal Amir's, worked as an informant for the

Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency.

Raviv testified at both Yigal Amir and Hagai Amir's trials and denied working for the agency. Hagai Amir's lawyer, Nitzana Letiner, said Raviv entrapped Hagai and committed perjury on the witness stand. She said she hoped the suit would lead to a retrial for her client.

Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency.

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HUMAN SHIELDS: Iraqi people chant their support for the leadership of Iraq and shout slogans against the U.S. Sunday in Baghdad as they volunteer to act as human shields inside a vegetable oil factory. Baghdad and Washington traded bitter accusations on Sunday as they pursued rival diplomatic offensives in the 19-day crisis over Iraq's expulsion of American U.N. arms inspectors (Reuters photo)

Iran to keep drug-related prisoners in special camps

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran plans to set up special camps of various degrees of severity for drug-related offenders in an effort to discourage narcotics trafficking and ease overcrowding in prisons.

The decision was taken Saturday by the Expediency Council, a top-level decision-making body chaired by former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Addicts and detainees convicted of less serious offences will be placed in camps with more tolerable conditions, while the hardcore offenders will be subjected to greater hardship, the council's secretary, Mohsen Rezaei, said.

The decision underlines the authorities' determination to stem the rising flow of narcotics through the country and growing drug use among the population.

Iran is a transit country for drugs coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan destined for European and Middle Eastern markets.

The media report daily of the seizure of tonnes of drugs, mainly opium. Last

year alone, 200 tonnes of various drugs were confiscated.

The Islamic Republic is presently working with the United Nations and Pakistan in the fight against drugs, but such cooperation is often undercut by the chaotic situation in Afghanistan, where opium cultivation is the sole means of survival for many farmers.

Amid growing concerns over the spread of drug use, the Iranian council has devoted much of its time in the past months to find ways of tackling the scourge.

According to official figures, 60 per cent of the 140,000 Iranian prisoners are held for drug-related activities.

"Drug addiction is steadily on the rise in Iran," Mohammad Fallah, the head of Iran's anti-drug squad, said recently.

He said a severe anti-drug law implemented in 1989, envisaging the death penalty for anyone caught with more than 30 grammes of heroin or five kilograms of opium, had done little to ease the problem.

Other Flights

Other Flights

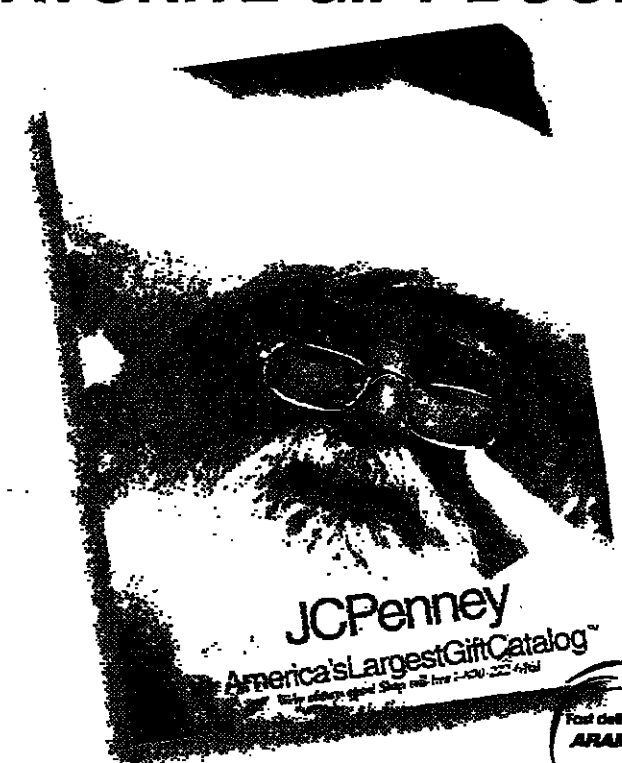
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15:00 — Gillette Sports Special

15:15 — Riding High

15:30 — Animal Show

16:00 — Oliver Twist

16:30 — Neighbours

17:00 — French Programmes

19:00 — News in French

19:15 — French programme

19:30 — News Headline

19:35 — Comedy — Murphy Brown

20:00 — The Health Show

20:30 — Babylon 5

21:10 — Highlander

22:00 — News in English

22:30 — Emergency Room

23:15 — Cosmos

PRAYER TIMES

04:41 — Fajr

06:01 — (Sunrise) Duha

11:20 — Dhuhur

14:15 — 'Asr

16:40 — Maghreb

18:00 — 'Isha

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Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

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English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to drop slightly with skies partly cloudy.

There will be a chance of scattered showers and winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be southerly moderate and seas rough.

Min/Max. temp.

Amman — 09/21

Aqaba — 18/29

Deserts — 08/22

Jordan Valley — 16/28

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 23, Aqaba 30 Humidity readings: Amman 42 per cent, Aqaba 32 per cent.

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Dr. Khalid M'addi — 661144

Dr. Salman Daboubi — 776751

Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi — 894788

Firas pharmacy — 661912

Ferdows pharmacy — 778336

Al Asema pharmacy — 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy — 623672

Al Salam pharmacy — 636730

Yacoub pharmacy — 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy — 637660

Najib pharmacy — 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu — 281484

Al Quds pharmacy — (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Samir Al Lawzi — 989601

Khalifeh pharmacy — 985417

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Civil Defence Department — 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue — 630341

Civil Defence Emergency — 199

Rescue Police — 192, 621111, 637777

Blood Bank — 775121

Fire Brigade — 617101

Traffic Police — 896390

Public Security Dept. — 630321

Hotel Complaints — 605800

Price Complaints — 661176

Water & Sewage Complaints — 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints — 787111

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Overseas Calls — 010230

Central Amman Telephone — 623101

Repairs — 661101

Abdali Tel. Repairs — 661101

Jordan Television — 773111

Radio Jordan — 774111

Water Authority — 680100

J. Electricity Authority — 815615

Electric Power Co. — 636381

RJ Flight Information — 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport — 08-53200

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AMMAN:

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Husseini Medical Centre — 813813/2

Khalidi Maternity — 644281/6

Akileh Maternity — 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity — 642362

Malhas, J. Amman — 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani — 607071

Shmeisani Hospital — 669131

University Hospital — 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital — 66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali — 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali — 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen — 777101/3

Al-Bashir — 775111/26

Army, Marka — 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital — 602240/50

Arnal Hospital — 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery — 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital — (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital — (09)900560

Tbn Sina Hospital — (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital — (09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital — (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital — (02)272725

Tbn Al Nafees Hospital — (02)247100

AQABA:



DISTRIBUTING COMPUTERS: Minister of Social Development Mohammad Mamser Sunday stresses the pivotal role of the "future builders" in the Kingdom and the need to help them develop their potential to build and shape the future of the country. Speaking at a ceremony in which the West Amman Rotary Club distributed computers to the "Future Builders Forum" on the occasion of the King's birthday, Dr. Mamser underlined the importance of social and voluntary work. He said the ministry will spend JD100 million annually on social work and activities (Petra photo)

Prime minister meets with Chinese military official

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday conferred with visiting Assistant Chief of Staff of the Chinese armed forces Qian Shugen and discussed promoting Jordanian-Chinese relations in military and defence fields.

Li Gen. Shugen expressed China's satisfaction with the two nations' bilateral relations and voiced support for the Kingdom's efforts in the peace process, which he said is backed by his country.

Li Gen. Shugen said he was impressed by the development of the Jordan Armed Forces and paid tribute to these forces' participation in U.N.-sponsored peace-keeping operations around the world.

Meeting ends with resolutions for Palestinian children's programmes

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates representing Jordan, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, as well as the Arab Broadcasting Union (ABU), concluded a one-week meeting in Cairo by adopting a number of resolutions and recommendations designed to maintain and strengthen educational programmes for the Palestinian children living under Israeli occupation.

and social and civic education and prepare intensive programmes supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people to gain their freedom and independence. Mr. Iser said the delegates called on the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Ministry of Higher Education to continue its collaboration with the Arab governments and organisations concerned with the situation in the occupied Arab territories in all matters related to school syllabi to protect Palestinian identity and Arab culture.

Israel's ongoing settlement programmes in and around Jerusalem and other Arab lands. The participants decided to provide the PNA with video tapes containing educational programmes and to continue beaming educational programmes to the occupied regions of Palestine via radio and television.

Funding sought at Doha for major water development project — JVA

AMMAN (Petra) — Securing funding for development projects, especially the expansion of the water sector in the Jordan Rift Valley, is among Jordan's goals in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Conference in Doha, Secretary General of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Zafer Alem said Sunday.

According to Dr. Alem, Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin will submit projects of vital importance to the Kingdom, including the Red Sea-Dead Sea canal, a project designed to provide desalinated water and allow energy generation by a power plant operating from waterfalls created as a result of the difference in height.

The project would yield 850 million cubic metres of water annually, of which Jordan would get 570 million while the rest would go to Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas, he said.

The ten-year, \$4.9 billion project would meet Jordan's water needs until the year 2020, he added. Mr. Haddadin will submit a feasibility study on a comprehensive plan for the overall development of the Jordan Rift Valley until the year 2020, according to Dr. Alem.

The overall plan comprises 73 short, medium, and long-term strategies covering water, agriculture, industry, telecommunications, tourism, the environment, and the development of human and energy resources, he explained.

12 weeklies officially suspended; court ruling on press amendments expected in one week

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

whose paper is one of eight suing the government over the law.

The ruling against Al Mithaq is believed to have set a precedent for the others.

The Lower House will be the last recourse for the weeklies if the ruling from the Higher Court, to be handed down Nov. 23, is not in their favour.

The amendments, promulgated as temporary legislation last May, may be examined by the Lower House in its scheduled upcoming regular session. Parliament reserves the right to endorse the law as it was written by the government, or rewrite or amend the law prior to its endorsement.

AMMAN — The revocation of the licences of 12 weekly newspapers became effective yesterday, just one week shy of a pending ruling by the Higher Court of Justice on the legality of temporary amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law that allow the government to withdraw the license of any newspaper.

The decision of the Press and Publications Department (PPD) to rescind the licences was not unexpected: in September, the PPD issued an order suspending 13 publications after finding them in violation of Article 13 of the newly-amended law, which laid out new capital requirements for both weekly and daily newspapers.

One editor, however, yesterday said in spite of the decision to revoke the licences of the 12 weeklies and a recent Higher Court ruling against one weekly, Al Mithaq, the closure of the weeklies is still not a fait accompli.

"We are still hoping that justice will be fair with us," said Al Bilad Editor-in-Chief Nidal Mansour, "and we are still hoping that the government will not infringe on acquired rights."

The court last week made a ruling on a case brought independently by Al Mithaq, which said the claim that Al Mithaq's acquired rights had been violated was "unfounded" and added that "the legislature [the government], in its attempt to organise the media, has the right to specify certain conditions...in accordance with the public interest, to preserve public order and to make the new rules immediately applicable to all legal circumstances without the right of anyone to protest that such measures infringe on acquired rights."

Tourism delegation to participate in London exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian delegation led by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji will take part in the "World Travel Market" exhibition, which is due to open today in London.

Jordan's wing at the exhibition was organised by the Ministry of Tourism in association with Royal Jordanian and 25 Jordanian tourism and travel agencies.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, Mr. Biltaji will address a workshop on tourism in Jordan, which will be attended by the media and tour operators.

Mr. Biltaji will later attend a press conference by ministers of tourism and heads of delegations from the Mediterranean Sea area.

Jordan's participation aims at marketing the Kingdom's tourism sector, increasing the number of visitors, and inviting financiers to invest in tourism projects.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess attends art festival
ZARQA (Petra) — HRH Princess Sumaya Sunday attended a cultural and art festival at Al Hashimiyeh University held to mark His Majesty King Hussein's 62nd birthday. The three-day festival includes pictures of the King and Jordanian products and handicrafts.

American educational specialist to take part in workshop
AMMAN (Petra) — Director of the Civic and Educational Centre in California Margaret Branson arrived here Sunday to take part in a workshop organised by the United States Information Service (USIS) and the University of Jordan's Faculty of Educational Sciences entitled "The Rationale for Civic Education." Her lecture will focus on the role of the press in promoting civic education. Dr. Branson will also meet with Jordanian officials from the public and private sectors during her four-day visit.

Dermatology conference begins today
AMMAN (Petra) — A three-day conference on dermatology kicks off today with the participation of specialists from Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Greece, Italy, France, and Jordan. The conference was organised by the Higher Council for Science and Technology.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM
* "La Lune dans le Caniveau" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 8:30 p.m.
FIFTH JORDANIAN THEATRE FESTIVAL
* Two plays entitled "The Martyrs Return" and "In Search of Nofan" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., respectively.

LECTURES
* An Evening of Art and Literature" by Mrs. Nelly Lama and Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.
* "Safeguarding the Monuments of Petra" (with slide show) by Dr. Helge Fischer at the Friends of Archaeology Centre (Tel. 696682), at 6:00 p.m.
* "Europe and the Arabs: A Political Misunderstanding and the Challenges of Partnership" (in Arabic) by Dr. Volker Perthes at the Applied Science University at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
* "Portrait 97" — works by over thirty Arab artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Nov. 30.
* "Works by Khalid Khreis at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 10.
* Exhibition of wallhangings and weavings by Bashir Kathem and others at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (Tel. 699131/2) until Dec. 4.
* Paintings by Bahija Al Hakim at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Nov. 22.
* "Journeys Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Art (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.
* Paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31.
* Works by Syrian artist Khaled Al-Maz at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Nov. 22.



BIRTHDAY CEREMONIES: HRH Crown Prince Hassan's Awards Office holds a special ceremony at the Child Care Centre in Wadi Seer on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's 62nd birthday. After the ceremony, gifts were distributed to the centre's children. The ceremony was also attended by Assistant of the Minister of Social Development Mohammad Sabbagh (Petra photo)

Information accessibility stressed at opening session of workshop

By Ahmed Naser and Suha Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The importance of information accessibility was stressed by the lecturer at a workshop entitled "Information and Its Role in Our Daily Lives," which was inaugurated Sunday by Her Royal Highness Princess Rania.

"Obtaining information is a right of people," Mahmoud Tayem, an expert in the informatics field, said at the workshop, which was organised by the Business and Professional Women Club (BPWC) in cooperation with the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation.

Mr. Tayem said a large amount of received information is ignored or accidentally destroyed, thereby lost, due to its disordered form. Another problem associated with information gathering is "the credibility of information that we come across on a daily basis," noted Mr. Tayem, adding that one way of dealing with such a dilemma is cross-checking through other sources.

He warned participants of the current lack of market studies, thereby hindering proper business planning. "This lack of information costs lots of money," Mr. Tayem said.

On the academic level, in reply to a participant's question regarding the role of teachers in disseminating information to students, Mr. Tayem pointed out that "any teacher cannot give more than 60 per cent of required information to students, meaning that students have to acquire the remaining 40 per cent through libraries."

their support for the leadership in Baghdad as they volunteer in Baghdad and Washington traded rival diplomatic offensives in the U.N. arms inspectors (Reuters photo)

keep drug-related cases in special camps

China's dissidents see light at end of tunnel after Wei release

BEIJING (AFP) — China's dwindling band of dissidents were visibly relieved Sunday by the release of Wei Jingsheng and said the move may herald a new era that reverses Beijing's tide of repression.

"This news of Wei Jingsheng's release came pretty suddenly and is a big event in China's political life," said Ding Zilin, a professor at the People's University of China who started speaking out against the government when her son was killed by soldiers during the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

"I hope that this incident is the start of a new era in China," she said in a telephone interview.

"I hope this is the start of a new era when dissidents who aren't famous at all can also benefit because the Chinese government will start following the law to protect people's rights," she added.

Xu Liangying, an outspoken Beijing University professor also praised Mr. Wei's release, which was conditional on Mr. Wei immediately getting a flight to the United States.

"Back in 1993, when the site for the 2000 Olympics was being chosen, the Chinese government decided it was a good policy to release dissidents but then from 1994, it adopted a much harsher line," he said. "We thought President Jiang Zemin might release some people before his visit to the United States, but in fact it happened after his return. Maybe President Jiang got a strong impres-

sion from the human rights situation in the United States," he added.

Mr. Wei, now 47, was unexpectedly released from his first 15-year term in September 1993 as Beijing was bidding to win international approval to host the 2000 Olympics.

But a tide of repression swiftly moved through Beijing's corridors of power as dissidents used their greater freedoms to speak out against the government.

Mr. Wei was again detained in April 1994, heralding a widespread crackdown on dissent in China.

His second release Sunday

came after a buildup of international pressure against Beijing's repressive policies — especially from the United States — and amidst rumours that Wang Dan, the student activist serving an 11-year sentence for plotting to overthrow the government, would also be released.

"It will not be surprising if Wang Dan is also released," said veteran dissident Ren Wanding who served seven years in jail after the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations.

"When the government decides to release people it normally releases quite a few and this can help

change the perception of China's human rights situation overseas," he added.

Wang Dan's mother, Wang Lingyun, said she had no indication that her 27-year-old son may be released, but said she was pleased about Wei.

Wang Zhihong, wife of Tiananmen Square "instigator" Chen Ziming, praised Mr. Wei's decision to seek medical treatment overseas but warned his release did not herald a change in policy.

"I wait for the day when the Chinese government really changes its policies towards all people like this," she said, adding that she and

her husband remained under 24-hour surveillance and that at least three plainclothes officers followed her every time she left the house.

Overseas human rights groups also expressed a more pessimistic view of Mr. Wei's flight to freedom.

Amnesty International's director for Asia, Rory Mungoven, said Mr. Wei's release was part of China's practice of quashing political dissent by moving it offshore.

"However welcome a development of this kind is, you need to keep it in perspective. The release of Mr. Wei is a symbolic gain but not necessarily a sign of broader, more concrete change," he said.

The group believes about 1,000 political prisoners remain in Chinese jails, largely forgotten after being detained without trial or convicted after unfair trials.

New York-based group Human Rights in China, meanwhile, sought to draw attention to dissidents remaining behind bars.

"As long as ... Wang Dan, Liu Nianchun, Li Hai and thousands of others remain silenced behind prison bars and or in exile, none of the 1.2 billion citizens of China can ever be truly free to express themselves without fear," it said in a faxed statement. It called on U.S. President Bill Clinton to make the unconditional release of other Chinese political prisoners who lack Mr. Wei's international fame a condition for his visiting China next year.



Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng talks to journalists in Beijing in this Sept. 20, 1993, file photo (Reuters photo)

Exiled Burmese democrats hope for change under reshuffled regime

RANGOON (AFP) — New blood has been drafted into Burma's renamed ruling junta in a move greeted Sunday by exiled MPs as a chance for the generals to make amends for years of repression.

The military leadership Saturday unveiled a new look regime called the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), promoting younger generals and sidelining many of the old-guard with a reputation for corruption.

The dismantling Saturday of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), as the junta was formerly known, gave the generals a chance to become "national heroes" by introducing democracy, the Burmese government-in-exile said.

But analysts here said the move appeared geared at boosting the regime's tarnished image and consolidating the power base of the leading generals. The top four figures of the SLORC remain at the helm of the new junta.

Other senior generals with a reputation for graft have been demoted into advisory positions. A source from the main opposition party led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, whose landslide election victory in 1990 was ignored by the SLORC, said the changes showed the junta appeared set on ensuring the military's dominance in politics.

"From the way the SPDC was announced, with a statement saying it was heading towards democracy, it's clear they mean democracy guided by the military, not general democracy," the source said in Rangoon.

The SLORC, which assumed power in 1988 when the military killed and arrested thousands in a clampdown on pro-democracy protesters, has pariah status in the eyes of Western nations for its human rights record.

But in an official statement Saturday, the junta's chairman senior General Than Shwe said the SLORC was dissolved and the new SPDC formed "to ensure the emergence of an orderly and democratic system."



File photo dated Feb. 23, 1997, of Burmese head of state Lieutenant General Than Shwe (left) and his number two General Maung Aye (AFP photo)

The exiled National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), formed by MPs elected in the 1990 elections, said the generals should prove that the change in the regime was "not in name only" and initiate dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic minorities, then institute democracy.

"The generals had a chance of becoming national heroes in 1988 when the people were looking to the military to take the lead towards delivering them the promised democracy. The opportunity is here again," the NCGUB said in a statement received in Bangkok. The formation of the SPDC comes as the Burmese leadership engineers a major shake-up in the senior ranks of the military.

New faces have been appointed to nine of the 12 regional military commands, while older generals have been shunted out and new air force and navy chiefs installed.

A new 14-member advisory group to the junta has been formed, including generals ousted from the SLORC and the cabinet. In what observers in Rangoon saw as a demotion for figures with a reputation for corruption.

A Burmese observer said local and foreign businesses would greet the shake-up as a way to put a lid on corruption and help end delays in decision-making due to personal interests and graft in senior levels of government.

The move would also reinforce the power base of the top generals, including Than Shwe, army chief Maung Aye, military intelligence chief Khin Nyunt and army Chief of Staff Tin Oo. By drafting in new recruits to the junta not loyal to figures such as the former Burmese strongman Ne Win, the top echelon would be able to exert more authority and influence.

"It is obviously an attempt to kill two birds with one stone: polishing up their tarnished image and streamlining the system somewhat," one analyst said.

Ne Win ruled during 26 years of harsh socialist rule up to 1988, and is still believed by some to pull strings behind the scenes in Rangoon despite standing down following the inception of the SLORC.

Analysts said another important change apparent from the founding of the SPDC is a new clear distinction drawn between the civilian administration, or cabinet, and the junta itself.

The 40-member cabinet is still mainly constituted by men of military rank, but they have been divested of their positions in the military.

This could signal what the junta sees as the next step in the evolution of the state, in which former military officers are incorporated into government in a drive to "civilianise" military rule.

Germany's Greens move towards upcoming election

KASSEL, Germany (AFP) — Germany's Greens toned down their radicalism at a party congress here to position themselves for an alliance with Social Democrats to defeat Chancellor Helmut Kohl in elections next year.

The party that has its roots in the youth revolution of the 1960s and which came into being as an environmentalist, pacifist coalition in 1980 has become Germany's third most powerful political grouping, right behind the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) and Mr. Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU) coalition.

Two of its main leaders, Greens parliamentary whip Joschka Fischer and spokesman Jurgen Trittin, carefully avoided mention of the controversial parts of their party's programme during the congress in the western German city of Kassel from Friday to Sunday.

Indeed, speakers from the 700 delegates were mum about the Greens proposal to disband the German army, despite a huge banner in the large auditorium at Kassel's Stadthalle conference centre calling for a

"Bundesrepublik (German state) without an army."

The emphasis during the three days here was on getting the Greens into power, even if the casual dress — neither Mr. Fischer nor Mr. Trittin wore a tie — had a counter-culture rather than governmental look.

Former 60s activist and now a Green member, Daniel Cohn-Bendit said the party was "maturing in order to be able to win the elections."

The enemy was carefully defined as Mr. Kohl, and the bread-and-butter political issue of unemployment that has risen to record levels after the chancellor's 15 years in office.

Mr. Fischer said defeating Mr. Kohl's centre-right government was crucial to bringing social justice to Germany.

In a particularly scathing comment, Mr. Fischer rejected Mr. Kohl's promise that he would be innovative during a planned fifth term, saying ironically: "The donkey of all creatures, which has eaten everything, is now planning to create something new."

Mr. Fischer attacked Mr. Kohl for having run out of ideas. "After many years of standstill he wants to pre-

sent himself as an innovator, although the chancellor doesn't believe in this himself anymore."

Mr. Trittin criticised Mr. Kohl for blocking a Europe-wide jobs policy, despite his constant championing of a united Europe.

But Mr. Fischer and Mr. Trittin were also careful to distance their party from the SPD, accepting it merely as a necessary ally for getting into government.

Mr. Trittin had unkind words for the main SPD figures, calling SPD chief Oskar Lafontaine a loser and Gerhard Schroeder a political opportunist, apparently an allusion to Mr. Schroeder's alleged backing of a nuclear waste dump in the state of Lower Saxony, where he is president.

Mr. Trittin said the red-green alliance was needed "not because it is such a good thing but because it is the only way to remove this government."

Mr. Fischer said: "With the SPD there will be a change of power, but with the Alliance 90/Greens there will be ecological and social change."

The Greens official title is Alliance 90/Greens after the West German Greens

merged in 1993 with the former East German pro-democracy movement. Germany was reunified in 1990.

The alliance would be an announced one of being ready to govern together but the two parties would campaign separately.

The Greens and the SPD have already formed alliances to run the administrations in five of Germany's 16 states.

Still, the Greens are split between so-called "realos" and "fundis" — realistic members who want pragmatic policies and fundamentalists who want to hold to the pacifist, counter-culture roots. This divide could widen as the party tries to move closer to the centre.

A sign of this was the Greens position on the euro, the European common currency. The Greens came out at the congress for the euro, but attached contingencies in a retreat from the full approval their leaders wanted.

The party rank-and-file insisted on the traditional Greens orientation that monetary union should be linked to creating more jobs in Europe.

China claims to have cure for Parkinson's disease

HONG KONG (AFP) — Chinese doctors claimed to have cured a sufferer of Parkinson's disease, enabling him to walk again without trembling uncontrollably, it was reported Sunday.

Doctors at the Tangdu Military Hospital in the northern Chinese city of Xi'an, reported recently they had successfully cured Liu Dong'an of the disease from which he had been suffering for 10 years, the Beijing-backed Ta Kung Pao said in a report.

The brief report said following surgery Liu's trembling in his hands and feet as well as muscular rigidity had disappeared.

No details of the treatment were given.

The success of the surgery could bring hope to millions of sufferers of Parkinson's disease in China, the report said.

Parkinson's disease, first described in 1817 by London physician James Parkinson, is a progressive degenerative brain disorder which strikes mysteriously, usually in middle age.

Sufferers tremble uncontrollably, have muscular rigidity, movement becomes slow and difficult and walking becomes reduced to a shuffle. Depression and dementia follow in half the cases.

Treatment so far has mainly involved drugs which can only slow the advance of the disease.

Explosions, incidents reported in eastern Slavonia

ZAGREB (AFP) — Croatian media Sunday reported three new explosions and two incidents in Eastern Slavonia, the last Serb-held part of the country which is soon to return to Zagreb's control.

Quoting the transitional police force, Hina news agency said that a Croat man was in hospital after being beaten up and robbed by four men early Sunday in Vukovar, the main town of eastern Slavonia. It also reported that two men and a woman had been detained

after threatening three Croat members of the transitional police force with guns in a restaurant in Vukovar Friday evening.

It said that the Croats were wearing civilian clothes and that the incident was broken up by a uniformed patrol of the transitional police force which came to the restaurant.

Meanwhile, a school in Vukovar was damaged early Sunday by an explosive device which shattered glass, Hina said. None was hurt. Another explosion rocked

the house of a Serb resident of Vukovar late Saturday, also causing damage but no casualties.

Croatian radio reported that a bomb in the Catholic graveyard in Vukovar had caused serious damage, although it did not say when the explosion occurred. Croats are generally Catholic while Serbs are generally Orthodox.

The incidents come as Eastern Slavonia, captured in 1991 by rebel Serbs backed by Belgrade, is preparing to

return to Zagreb's control once the mandate of the current U.N. administration runs out in January. They also come ahead of the anniversary of the fall of Vukovar after a bitter three-month siege on Nov. 18.

Other incidents have been reported over the past few days. Friday night, a rocket was fired at the town council building in Vukovar and Thursday leaflets threatening reprisals against the Serbs were found in the town centre.

Polls open in Italian local elections

ROME (AFP) — Some 10 millions Italians were voting Sunday in municipal elections seen as a test of popularity for Prime Minister Romano Prodi's centre-left coalition which took power nationally 18 months ago.

As polling stations opened at 7:00 a.m. (0600 GMT), attention focused on major cities such as Rome, Naples, Venice and Genoa were analysts predicting the coalition will retain control against a fragmented and less well-established right wing.

Some 10 million electors

are qualified to cast their votes in 421 communities of more than 15,000 inhabitants, including 15 regional capitals.

Polls shut at 10:00 p.m., but counting of votes will not start until Monday. Exit polls broadcast on television as the polls close will give a good idea of the result.

In cases where there is no clear majority, a second-round run off will be held in two weeks.

Mayors are directly elected as well as municipal councils, so that they can end up on opposite

sides of the political fence in the same town. Such an eventuality is possible in the major cities, where star mayors have achieved a popularity far exceeding that of their parties.

In 1993 new electoral legislation was passed to enable the direct election of Italian mayors, a move intended to end patronage and political instability caused in part by the previous system of indirect representation. Local elections in Sicily will be held on Nov. 30.



Ghali dismisses row over posting as Francophone chief

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Time for Arab initiative

WHEN IRAQ invaded Kuwait in August 1990 Jordan was among a few Arab countries that called for an Arab solution to what was an internal Arab crisis. But in the first few days after the invasion, the U.S. was quick to convince its strategic partners in the West and key Arab states to globalise the conflict and subsequently join an alliance of 30 plus countries that, several months later, was able to drive the Iraqi army out of Kuwait.

In 1990 and since then the U.N. Security Council, prodded by the U.S., has passed a number of resolutions that have resulted virtually in crippling Iraq and driving its people to great hardships — to near starvation. The oil-rich Arab countries which financed the Gulf war and, since 1990, have been spending much of their revenues on the purchase of sophisticated, Western-made weapons have been coming under increasing pressure to review their policies, especially at such junctures as we are witnessing over Iraq today. Even Saudi Prince Khaled Ben Sultan who led the Alliance's forces against Iraq in 1991 recently wrote a number of articles that are very critical of the conduct of U.S. policy in the Gulf and the Middle East region as a whole.

The U.S. is probably aware that faith in the Middle East peace process and confidence in U.S. policies are eroding fast among the Arabs, leaders and the led. Nowhere is this more evident at the moment than at the Doha summit, which is being boycotted by many countries which fought alongside the Americans against Iraq.

That only eight out of 22 members of the Arab League are taking part in the 4th MENA Conference is testimony to the fact that many Arabs do not see signs of American "evenhandedness" in dealing with their causes. The Arab World in general is being constantly reminded that while the situation in Iraq is becoming increasingly untenable, politically and otherwise at the hands of the U.S. government, the situation in Israel is hardly changing because, apart from taking negative symbolic steps against the recalcitrant Benjamin Netanyahu, the Americans are not dealing equally forcefully with the Israelis as they are with the Iraqis.

To be fair, though, it appears that the U.S. is beginning to adjust to Arab demands and pleas to avoid a military confrontation as a way to end the standoff with Iraq over the composition of the U.N. inspection teams. Witness the different tone in White House statements over the weekend after His Majesty the King and President Clinton talked for five hours in Washington.

Such a change could be seized upon to crystallise a new Arab initiative not only to avoid an American-Iraqi showdown for now but also to find a way to rehabilitating Iraq into the comity of nations, once and for all.

While such vision and course of action eluded the Arab World in 1990 and 1991, the idea that King Hussein advocated at the time could be put to good use now. Iraq, which obviously is seeking rehabilitation, is surely more than willing to cooperate with its fellow Arab countries to end its plight. On the other hand, quite a few of the Arab leaders who refused to deal with the Iraqi regime then might be reconsidering their position today.

A summit grouping leaders of the concerned Arab states would be a timely endeavour to defuse the explosive situation in the Gulf. If the Arab leaders could end the Iraqi crisis that way, they surely can also succeed where the U.S. has failed to do so thus far: putting the Middle East peace process back on track. An Arab success over Iraq would not be in conflict with anyone's interest, and certainly not that of the U.S., to be sure.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fakhri Kavar said Washington seems to be determined not only to remove Iraq's weapons but its leadership as well. The writer said those countries which found an excuse for the U.S. and its allies to wage war on Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait should wake up to the fact that Iraq is no longer occupying its southern neighbour nor is it threatening U.S. interests in the Gulf region. Kavar said Iraq has recognised Kuwait and its international borders, implemented all U.N. resolutions and allowed the U.N. inspection teams to destroy all its weapons of mass destruction. But he said Washington is not satisfied with starving the Iraqis and is seeking to annihilate its leaders and prevent Iraq from ever rebuilding its military power. In its drive to achieve its "evil goals," the writer said, the U.S. is seeking the backing of the Arab states which supported its 1991 aggression on Iraq, adding that it is really painful to see the Arab countries failing to gather enough courage to hold a summit meeting to deal with the U.N.-Iraq crisis and end the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Let's secure consumers' rights

ACHIEVING A quality standard and maintaining it is a difficult affair. Businesses in Jordan spend significant sums of money to attract consumers. In many cases, however, quality maintenance seems to be an eventual impossibility. One establishment after another seems to plateau at some quality level thereafter, and quality plummets straight downward never to return.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in the services sector where it is extremely difficult to gauge standards or assess quality failure. What is the reason for this quick failure and why do services and goods collapse so quickly in terms of quality? The answer is that there is a definite need for binding contracts and monitoring.

Before delving into the abstract world of economics, let me demonstrate the point with a recent example. Last Wednesday I went with my wife and child to a movie theatre to watch a film called "Mr. Bean," a comedy which our family has enjoyed watching on TV for quite some time. Of course, we expected that the movie would have no violence, nudity or obscenity just like the TV show. Therefore, we thought it would be appropriate for an eight-year-old. The theatre was filled with like-minded parents accompanied by their children. However, to everyone's surprise, disgust and to the horror of the children, the management of the theatre decided that since the theatre was full it would be wise to give the audience a glimpse of coming attractions, all of which happened to be extremely violent. Children watched, in horror, as a monster, with saliva dripping from

its fangs, began to lick the body of a semi-nude woman with his large red-forked tongue. The female, completely terrorised, managed through some device to incinerate the monster, who undaunted by the fire, started to chase after her while completely engulfed in flames. As the woman fled, she fell down and became completely at the mercy of the burning fiend, who pursued her as the screen went black. The prelude to this example of cinematic excellence was Wesley Snipes being shot at and maimed via many creative and violent methods by several people, who exchanged fatal blows in close-up shots with copious amounts of blood being excreted. The movie preview that preceded these other two was also violent. By the time the previews were over my child, among others, was sitting in shock, completely disturbed by the power of the violence that he saw.

What happened was an example of market failure through bundling, a case where a person purchases something and receives something else. The seller of a product (Mr. Bean in this case) forced the buyer to consume with it another product (violent previews). Was the management of the movie theatre aware of the violence in the previews? Of course they were. However, the fact there were many people in the theatre, including many adults, gave the owner a perfect chance to advertise coming attractions. Was he/she behaving rationally? Of course he/she was. With a huge captive audience the product was being advertised for almost nothing. Why didn't the manager, knowing that the theatre was filled with children,

show previews of coming attractions that were child friendly? The management had no incentive to do that because the contract between the seller and the buyer specified only the movie to be seen.

Most parents who were attending the movie did not know they were going to see violent previews, otherwise they would have probably thought twice before taking their children to see it. What the movie ticket did not specify was the previews and their ratings. Although, some of the consumers complained, it was to no avail as nothing was done, indicating that the management was confident that it was not liable. In other words, not only was the contract incomplete, but the law also sided with management or appeared indifferent.

Can the situation be remedied? Yes. The government needs to enforce the ratings of movies such that no child is allowed to see movies that have been rated as adult or for older-aged children. In this case, the owner of the theatre would not be allowed to show movies that are rated R (Restricted) even as a preview to audiences that are only allowed to watch a PG-rated movie. This is where the government comes in — by making regulations enforceable.

Additionally, there must be a transparent law that protects the consumer. The ability of the consumer to demand compensation for damages must be enhanced to levels compatible with those adhered to in industrial countries. The consumer should never be the weak link in the exchange process. On the contrary, the customer is always right.

The 'brutal peace' of peacekeepers

Alex de Waal denounces the U.N. for allowing its peacekeepers to murder civilians — and then claiming to be above international law.

IN JUNE 1993, a Belgian soldier serving with the United Nations in Somalia put a gun to the head of one of my Somali colleagues and threatened to shoot him. At the time I was investigating the war in Somalia: that the residents were living in fear of the peacekeepers came as a shock.

The Belgian military attorney dismissed my complaint with a sneer. When I investigated more thoroughly I quickly discovered that arbitrary killings and torture of Somali civilians were common. The U.N. then took my case more seriously: they instructed that I should be arrested and detained. (I left town).

The truth is now coming out: many of the contingents serving in Somalia were brutal and racist. Italians, Canadians, Malaysians, Nigerians, Pakistanis and Americans are among the culprits alongside the Belgians. The hostility their

behaviour generated was no small factor in the willingness of ordinary Somalis to take up arms and fight against what was increasingly seen as an occupying force. But, in their bunkers, the U.N. — military and humanitarian alike — closed their eyes to the human rights violations and the inevitable reaction.

Although some charges of torture and homicide have belatedly come to court, the full implications of this dark episode in the U.N.'s history have yet to be recognised.

The abuses were not just isolated acts by individual soldiers on checkpoints. When the U.N. went to war against General Mohammed Farah Aideded, between June and October 1993, American helicopters fired on hospitals, houses and civilian crowds, killing hundreds of unarmed people. After an attack in which 71 died, the head of the U.N. mission, Admiral Jonathan Howe said, "We knew what we were hitting: it was well planned." If a handful of Belgian troops are to be brought to court for torture then it follows that some U.S. military officers should be prosecuted for grave

breaches of the Geneva Convention — otherwise known as war crimes. When I challenged a U.S. military attorney on these points, his answer was that the Geneva Convention did not apply to U.N. forces, on the technicality that the U.N. itself was not a signatory to the Convention. The official line was that the U.N. Security Council had authorised "all necessary measures" against Aideded — implicitly including gunning down women and children. Acting on behalf of the world's highest legal authority seemed to empower U.N. peacekeepers to flout international law.

Somalia is a striking manifestation of a new doctrine in international affairs, which we might call "humanitarian impunity." A succession of Security Council resolutions on Bosnia and elsewhere have focused on getting the aid convoys through, even if this means compromising on the protection of civilians. Aid givers and peacekeepers, not local civilians, of international law. This is an insidious inversion: the unlearned lesson of Somalia is that it generates resentment and political problems. In

Africa, the results have become catastrophic — not least for the U.N. itself. In the Rwanda and Congo crises, U.N. agencies — notably the U.N. High Commission for Refugees — displayed an even higher level of hubris and sense of impunity.

Just as the bureaucrats in their Mogadishu bunkers were oblivious to the anger they were generating, U.N. officials — and the wider Western public — seem unaware of the deepening antagonism between many Africans and U.N. agencies. In recent months, UNHCR has been expelled from Eritrea and Congo. With the U.N. seemingly incapable of reform, many African governments appear ready to do without it altogether.

Sadly, it may already be too late for the U.N. humanitarian agencies to haul themselves back from the brink. But the U.N. should make a start by formally renouncing the doctrine of humanitarian impunity and opening a public inquiry into why things have gone so badly wrong.

The Guardian

Human Rights File

Children's rights get boost

By Walced M. Sadi

THE MINISTRY of Social Development and the National Task Force for Children (NTFC) in coordination with the Jordan River for Development Projects (JRDP) plan to submit to Parliament a draft act on the rights of the child in Jordan comprising six main chapters on health, social care, education, labour, penal rules and general principles. Both Her Majesty Queen Noor and HRH Princess Rania Abdullah are lending their support to this legislative initiative in a bid to extend additional protection to children and promote their rights, especially the most vulnerable children. Queen Noor views the proposed act as a specific "frame of reference" for children's rights in the country based on Arab and international conventions. JRDP has already made great strides in offering assistance to abused children by creating a special unit for child abuse as well as by proposing specific amendments to the Kingdom's penal code.

It goes without saying that the principal international instrument on the rights of the child is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which Jordan ratified in 1991. The convention is generally viewed as the most complete submission on children's rights and the first ever international exercise to accord these special rights the full force of international law. The CRC can also be regarded as a commitment on the part of state parties to the future. Children comprise at least half the world's population, and it is they who will shoulder the responsibilities of the future generations. Till the children of today become the adults of the future, their world will remain different from the world of adults. During this transition from childhood to adulthood, children need a caring world that recognises children's need for freedom to develop their own intellectual, moral and spiritual capacities. Healthy and safe environment, affordable access to medical care and basic education, basic nutrition, clothing and shelter are but samples of the requirements for the healthy development of a child's body, mind and soul.

The CRC accords children an extensive array of rights that needs to be fully incorporated into our national laws. For those countries which have ratified or acceded to the convention, it has become part of their binding international law. For those few states which have yet to become state parties, the convention is also a binding customary international law. For us in Jordan, as a state party, we are called upon to implement Article 4 of the CRC which stipulates that "state parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the present convention." This legal commitment means that we in Jordan should have already reviewed our national laws to make sure that they are in line with the provisions of the convention. Better still, as a binding treaty, the convention should be adopted in full as part of our national laws and regard any national law which is inconsistent with the convention as null and void.

I respectfully suggest, therefore, that the draft Child Act which is currently being articulated by the Ministry for Social Development, NTFC and JRDP should first incorporate the provisions of the convention in full and aim to go beyond them where seen appropriate and fit. It is, therefore, never enough to take cognizance of the CRC or pay tribute to it or even accept it as the guiding light for all of our future legislative actions on the rights of the child. The CRC itself in all its provisions and wordings should be made part and parcel of the Jordanian laws that can be invoked in any national court of law.

In addition, our experts in the field of children's rights are called upon to apply the jurisprudence that has developed over the past few years on the rights of the child by reviewing the deliberations and decisions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This committee monitors the progress made by state parties in meeting their obligations under the convention. It also interprets the various articles of the convention and renders recommendations and suggestions to governments when their periodic reports are considered. It is therefore very useful to be aware of the deliberations and judgements of the committee as we continue the path of improving the lot of children in our midst on the basis of international norms. The biggest challenge that face us will be when we consider removing all distinction between so-called "legitimate" and "illegitimate" children. Suffice to recall at this juncture, that as far as the convention is concerned children are never "illegitimate." If anybody is illegitimate it is the biological parents.

Hendrik S. Weiler
Amman

LETTERS

To the Editor:

A serious matter

MANY of us here in Western Europe were dismayed that not one woman was elected or re-elected to Jordan's legislature in the recent elections. What is clear is that women are not being selected for winnable seats, and ancient ways are inhibiting Jordan's advance into modern times where women too should have a powerful voice in government.

This is a serious matter. Here in the United Kingdom it was absolutely clear that in the first 80 years of this century women's legitimate and urgent needs were completely ignored or marginalised by "the Mother of Parliaments." During those decades 97 out of every 100 members of Parliament were men. Men simply are not the best arbiters of women's needs. And an overwhelming number of one gender governing a nation means an unbalanced society and uncertain development.

I therefore ask all men of goodwill and understanding in Jordan to do their best to encourage and elect many women to Jordan's legislatures at local and national levels, and I ask women by the thousands to decide they should have a strong say in the future of their country, through running for

When I first started training future women leaders here in the United Kingdom, 17 years ago, we may have had a woman prime minister but there were only 19 women in total in the House of Commons.

In those 17 years, through the determination of thousands of women and men of goodwill, the entire atmosphere has changed. 19 women have now become a record 120.

As a nation we look forward to our new millennium with hope and pride in the ever-increasing number of elected women. My belief is that women in government bring progress with stability, for the good of all.

May I wish Jordan the same. I have been several times to Jordan over the past three years, at the request of the British Council and HRH Princess Basma. To me Jordan is a jewel among nations, and could set an example of parity democracy that would profoundly and beneficially influence all the nations around her.

Lesley Abdela
London

To the Editor:

U.N. member in arrears

THAT THE U.S. Congress did not approve its \$1.3 billion in dues to the U.N. is hardly surprising. The majority of American lawmakers, and Americans in general, hold the U.N. in contempt, seeing it as an impediment to the untrammelled exercise of American power.

The U.S. administration has been an indifferent supporter of the U.N. at the best of times. It has seen, and used the U.N. as an informal extension of its State Department and Pentagon, used when convenient to give an "international" facade to narrow American foreign policies.

It is time that the U.N. takes the next logical step — that of suspending U.S. membership in the U.N. (that includes the Security Council with its American veto), until its arrears are paid in full. It may take some courage, but it is necessary for the future health of the organisation.

The U.S. may, of course, then resign

from the U.N. — but that is much less a disaster than can be imagined.

Firstly, it is no financial loss, since it doesn't pay its dues anyway.

Secondly, it removes the last imperial power from abusing and misusing the U.N. as its national adjunct to camouflage its imperial policies.

Thirdly, it would probably improve the U.N. by removing its obsession with having to appease the Americans in the hope that the U.S. government will pay its dues in arrears.

It can operate independently of U.S. national dictates, and help to improve world situations without having to clear everything with the State Department first.

The U.S. has said "no" to fulfilling its obligations to the U.N. It is time the U.N. said "no" to the Americans. It has no further obligations to the U.S.

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Features

Attack against Iraq will be extremely destabilising — Regent

(Continued from page 1)

the absence of a conflict-resolution centre, a conflict-prevention centre. This is the only region in the world where you simply cannot talk about regional preemption of conflict. The three main concerns in this part of the world (are) oil, security, the buying and selling of weapons, and Israel to a very large extent.

Q: Have you ever met the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and has the King ever met him?

A: I met him on numerous occasions during the time when he was regarded by Western countries as defending Western interests in the first war with Iran. I think he is a man who is largely isolated from the international community. He hasn't travelled at all and he sees things very much within the context of a parochial-little-Baghdad view of the world. This is a very dangerous situation to be in.

Q: In that sense do you think that the West has got him all wrong, did it misunderstand him?

A: No, I think that as far as countries in this situation — let's look at North Korea, let's look at Vietnam, let's look at Burma — the use of force was an adjunct to diplomatic initiatives. But in this region \$300 billion of weapons have been bought during the last six or seven years. So there has been too much buying and selling of weapons and oil to be concerned with getting on with the job of bringing Iraq into the international community.

Q: On this question of weapons in this region, United Nations, and particularly the head of the weapons inspection team Richard Butler, maintain that this whole crisis was triggered by Iraq because the weapons inspectors were on the verge of uncovering new information about their programme of weapons of mass destruction, particularly biological weapons?

A: This has yet to be proved. And it is clear that what President Clinton says is true, that what has been destroyed to date is far more than what had been destroyed during the Gulf war. But let me stress again that the buying and selling of weapons preceded this crisis and the Iraq Kuwait debacle, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. And \$300 billion against \$35 billions envisaged in the Casablanca economic conference of three years ago for a decade of development from Morocco to Turkey inclusive. So these weapons have been built up largely by Western commercial concerns over a considerable period of time.

Q: And you think this has not been addressed, there is some sense of double standards in this?

A: I think that there is double standards in terms of the region as a whole. Whether it is chemical weapons, biological weapons, nuclear weapons, whether they are possessed by Israel, whether they are possessed by Iraq or Iran, we live in the killing fields. Any thing that explodes over us now, carrying a biological or chemical warhead, is going to obliterate us, probably as we talk. We do not have the ability to defend ourselves or even to manufacture these weapons, nor do we have the desire to.

Q: Syria and Egypt, two powerful Arab countries, who fought against Iraq in the Gulf war, have said that they do not want to see military resolution of this crisis. We have seen several Gulf states also suggest that they are not willing to lend their facilities in any possible attack against Iraq. If it should come to that, things are much more different now than they were seven-eight years ago?

A: The Iraqi people have been bottled up. Eighteen to twenty million people have been bottled up for seven years and there has been no progress in the talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis, so there is a lot of mood for disenchantment.

Q: Do you think that there is in any way getting through to the U.S., getting through to Western countries when they come to consider these successive crises with Iraq, particularly I am talking about a widespread feeling that in the implementation of U.N. resolutions there is a double standard about it, people are insisting that U.N. resolutions against Iraq are observed but not so much insist when it comes to Israel?

A: There is that sense very clearly and that is what I think Jordanian and many people from Asia and Africa felt over the question of Bosnia. But to get back to double standards, it is not a question of a region that the

Western hemisphere is looking at today, it is oil, security and Israel. Three separate titles. Dual containment of Iraq and Iran does not mean much today. When we speak of China, we hear American diplomacy saying engagement is not endorsement. We do not want the United States to endorse these policies of countries whose policies they disapprove but at the same time we want them to engage with, focus on the region — a region inclusive of all, Iraq, Iran and Turkey, and exclusive of none.

Q: When you look back at the last major crisis during the Gulf war, do you think you got it wrong, do you think Jordan got wrong?

A: I think in terms of right and wrong we probably were quite objective, quite focused. I remember seeing Mrs. Thatcher during 1990, and she said to me how do the people feel and I thought let me give it straight. The King is very popular but possibly for the wrong reasons from your point of view. She said 'well I don't really care what the reasons are' so she realised that we had a constituent problem and I said to her that these missiles are going to fly through our airspace. Israel on the one side and Iraq on the other. But I want to emphasise that our position was one of calling for a regional solution. Today seven years later we are calling for an international solution for a regional line up and still the issue is not resolved.

Q: Do you think there is still that misunderstanding if one can put it like that, for Jordan's position as you said in its being buffeted by the successive crises in Iraq and often there is a sense that Jordan is being painted into a corner, being forced to make decisions of are you for or against this or that coalition with Iraq? Is there still that general misunderstanding?

A: Well we are caught right in the middle in terms of the politics, of demography. We have received three waves of refugees including a million and a half during the 1990 Iraq-Kuwait war — 1991 war. Consequently we are the biggest host country for Palestinian refugees, 48, 67, and 91. But at the same time, we are the middle ground between oil on the one side and Israel on the other. So I don't think it is a misunderstanding of our role, it is a misunderstanding of what responsibilities we have to shoulder, what interests we have to further.

Q: What do you think is going to happen next when you consider this week of diplomatic activity as spelled out by President Clinton. And also we mention Tariq Aziz, also travelling through the region — to press Iraq's case?

A: Well I think the possibilities of a flash conflict exist and also the possibility of diplomacy being furthered exist against the background of the Doha economic conference and indeed the Organisation of Islamic Conference summit in Tehran. So the timing of the crises is rather interesting because if there is going to be an attack against Iraq, against the background of these two major regional meetings, and if there is going to be an outcry, and presumably an anti-Western outcry, it is going to be extremely destabilising. So it is reassuring to know that the strength is there but at the same time diplomacy is being used based on the tremendous force deployment in this region.

Q: It is particularly interesting as you mention all these international fora involving the Arab Islamic World taking place at the same time of this crisis is going on, do you think that is something playing in the mind of President Clinton to be seen to be attacking Iraq at such a stage?

A: Indeed it must be a factor in his mind and I think that President Clinton is extremely sensitive to human politics not only in terms of the United States but in terms of this region, and I see good coming out of bad in terms of a greater focus on the region broadly defined.

Q: I'd like to press a bit more in terms of Jordanian public opinion particularly around this issue of sanctions. What do you think the ordinary people on the streets (feel)?

A: Well, I think that Jordan is a country (where) 43 per cent of its trade depend on Iraq trade. Most of the companies that worked with Iraq are now working at barely 55 per cent capacity. That means people who have been dependent for the livelihood of their families (on trade with Iraq) are looking for an alternative. I am off to attend the signing of the agreement with

the European Union but we are living a claustrophobic state of siege. Iraq on the one side, Palestinian territories, as I described, on the other are closed to us — virtually closed to us. Syria is a highly protective economy. We are trying to open up towards the Gulf but this is a transitory period. The World Bank tells us we are a shining star. The fundamentals are good but no body can eat fundamentals.

Q: Are you an optimistic man?

A: I have to get up in the morning and persevere. We have been through crises in the past, in 1967 I was a university undergraduate (and I) came back to build refugee camps. In 1991 people asked 'what did you do in the war?' Then I was digging latrines; we had one and half million refugees through that deserted desert outpost, which (the U.N.) inspectors crossed a couple of days ago, overnight and I always seem to be directly affected by the human tragedy, that we simply cannot get a break for this region. Once again vested interest, oil security and a role for Israel in the region. By all means we would like to see Israel as part of an interdependent state system, but the state system has to survive, certainly better than the ethnic sectarian break-up of Bosnia.

Q: It sounds that you have a very strong sense of de jure when considering this kind of crises?

A: But you cannot really use that. I suppose yes I feel quite nauseated by actually seven years later we are reliving many of the same nightmares. You sit and say what do I plan on my agenda next week, a conference, a war totally unreal situation.

Q: What do you think it will be — do you have any idea?

A: We sat on the fifth of January 1991 with all the NGOs and said how do we prepare for the human impact of the next war. I think on this one it is only going to be a middle of both. Maybe a localised conflict here and there, but ultimately I hope that the end game is in sight. I hope that Iraq will conform with the international community and I hope the international community will come to the rescue of the Iraqi people.

Q: Is Jordan making any preparations should it come to conflict, should we see refugees coming across the border again?

A: Well certainly we are trying to prepare for the worst and we are totally aware of the track record.

Q: I have to ask you can you yourself ever imagine an Iraq without the Iraqi leader President Saddam Hussein?

A: Look we are a country that neighbours another Arab country. I don't think it is easy to call for the change of this leader or that leader, but no man lives forever.

Q: What do you think will be the future after this?

A: We have called for an Iraq based on respect for human rights, based on respect for the pluralist mosaic effectively that their country is, in terms of Kurds, in terms of Sunni Arab, in terms of Shia Arab. And let me remind you that the family to which I belong was the monarchy of Iraq in 1958. Thirty-five women and children of my family were massacred outside their palace on the 14 July 1958. And at that time I want to say very clearly that it is perfectly obvious that were it not for interest in oil the family would not have been killed.

So let's hope today that if Iraq ever comes out of this disaster that we can talk of evolution rather than revolution.

Q: Does that make you feel, you and your family, much closer personal links in terms of what is happening in Iraq?

A: I think this is a point that has to be understood. Yes clearly we feel a very close personal link with every Iraqi.

Q: Going back to the question of U.N. resolutions, trying to find a diplomatic way out of this crisis. At some stage it surely must involve Iraq complying with those resolutions which are in place at the moment?

A: Clearly we expect that the exchange between Kofi Annan, U.N. secretary general, and the Iraqi leadership will lead to compliance with these resolutions. How this is going to be brought about, Mr. Butler said we would return in some way, we don't know how. Whether it will be the result of a decade, the use of force. But once again I want to stress the bottom line as I heard from Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, they are prepared to accept an inspection committee provided that it is (of) balanced composition and contains membership of scientists and industrialists and so forth. I don't know whether this is going to be regarded as preconditions but that is what I heard.

Q: You have spoken in terms of the Iraqi people suffering and that the international community should in some sense rescue them, what do you mean by this?

A: Well the whole media community today is focusing on weapons of mass destruction and the capability of Iraq's inflicting these weapons of mass destruction on its neighbours. No body has spoken of late, over the last seven years, of the plight of the Iraqi people and what have been inflicted by the Iraqi leader's recalcitrance and by the sanctions on the children of Iraq. According to the United Nations 23 per cent (of children) under five years suffer from malnutrition and constitute 39 per cent of current monthly deaths, of about 11,000, which is four times that in 1991. The UNFPA, the entire U.N. community, FAO, World

Health Organisation are screaming to be heard. Why don't we have a conference on the humanitarian impact of the sanctions on the children of Iraq? Why don't the Iraqi people become more aware of the fact that sanctions is an issue which is linked to their future and to their happiness were it not for the continuing recalcitrance?

Q: Why do you think these are happening?

A: I think because probably the spin doctors think that if they start talking about the humanitarian aspect, then effectively the Iraqi government would use this as a weapon to undermine the examination of weapons. So you have this catch 22 situation. I say keep the examination of weapons in place, apply United Nations sanctions, respect the territorial integrity of Iraq, but at the same time make it clear the sanctions are not an indefinite starvation of the Iraqi people.

Q: The international community has made it quite clear that it will not deal with Iraq led by Saddam Hussein. Should they just continue what they left unfinished? Do you think that they ought to have finished or should finish what they didn't finish at the end of the Gulf war?

A: Well today the international community, particularly the U.S. and possibly the U.K., are edging towards saying that the direct responsibility lie in the continuation of the rule of Saddam Hussein. And I think the Tariq Aziz mission was to say are you talking about sanctions, and the examination regime or are you talking about the future of Saddam Hussein. I think that this crisis is finally going to give a clear indication to every one that the issue is not purely one of sanctions, but possibly the issue is one of the evolution even of the leadership of Iraq, this is how at least today one is reading the crisis. I think if you get to that point effectively this you are talking about new developments.

In the context of Bosnia, for example, there was a specific focusing on political leaders. Will we get to that option?

Q: Do you think they should?

A: As I said we are a country that neighbours Iraq and a country that has diplomatic relations with Iraq. So it is not for me to make a comment like that. All I am saying is that either the Security Council believes in business as usual, one crisis after another as we have witnessed over seven years and more suffering for the Iraqi people and more money for the arm merchants and countries buying weapons to defend themselves from Iraq and more talk of oil pricing and less consideration for the people of Iraq and Palestine, or effectively a breakthrough. I think that the superpowers and the P5 are holding their cards very close to their chests at the moment. It's a crisis in flux.

Jordan, Israel sign accord on industrial zone

(Continued from page 1)

opening up new markets for products manufactured in Irbid, according to Dr. Mulki.

Dr. Mulki told reporters that only products exported through Irbid will be allowed in the U.S. market free of tariffs, while other products will be subject to custom duties and trade regulations.

Asked if Jordan is rewarding Israel by signing this agreement, Dr. Mulki said: "Jordan is rewarding itself by providing its local products free access to the U.S. market."

This agreement will provide "access to the U.S. market, which is a huge market. It will also provide proper transfer of capital into the zone and trans-

fer of international technology so that the products exported through the zone can meet the specifications and standards of the American market," Dr. Mulki said.

At the signing ceremony, the Israeli minister said that about 10 joint Jordanian-Israeli ventures are currently operating in Irbid, and hoped that this agreement will result in more such ventures in the business and industrial sectors.

However, AFP reported Sunday that Omar Salah, chairman of Century Investment Group, a joint venture Jordanian-Israeli company, said that "the crisis in the peace process will limit the effectiveness of this agreement, because the links with Israel are becoming a liability for Jordanian companies."

The plan to designate Irbid a Qualifying Industrial Zone was announced during a visit to Jordan earlier last month by Undersecretary of State for Economic and Agricultural Affairs Stuart Eizenstat.

The U.S. official had praised the progress made by Jordan in the past few years, which had in turn helped strengthen U.S. Jordanian economic ties as well as promote greater interest by U.S. businessmen in the Kingdom. He noted that increased U.S. financial assistance to Jordan will make Jordan among the top five recipients of foreign assistance worldwide (after Israel, Egypt, Russia and the Ukraine).

ANNOUNCEMENT

EXTENSION OF (TRC CALL 1997-1)

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan announces that it has EXTENDED the purchasing of Call for Tenders for two national public access mobile radio service (TRUNKING) licences until December 17, 1997.

Following consultation with the industry, the TRC issued the Call for Tenders dated October 18, 1997 (TRC Call 1997-1), which sets out the process that the TRC will follow in awarding the new licence. The process consists of two phases. During the first phase, a special tender evaluation committee will review the technical aspects of the submissions from all applicants. Those applicants who successfully pass this phase will participate in the second phase, in which their sealed financial proposals will be opened at a meeting of all qualifying applicants.

Parties interested in applying for the public access mobile radio service (TRUNKING) licence may obtain a copy of the Call for Tenders from the TRC upon payment of JD2,500. The deadline for the submission of applications is January 25, 1998.

For further information, contact:

The Office of the Director General

Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

P.O. Box 850967, Amman 11185, Jordan

Telephone (962) 6-862020 - Fax (962) 6-863641

Iraq says not seeking confrontation

(Continued from page 1)

boycotted by many of Washington's Arab allies.

"Unfortunately for the Iraqi people, instead of meeting these requirements, for six years, Saddam Hussein has lied, delayed, obstructed and tried to deceive."

"We must and we will ensure that Iraq never again threatens its neighbours or the world with weapons of mass destruction," Ms. Albright told delegates at the opening of the MENA conference in Qatar.

"Together we must and we are doing all we can to achieve a diplomatic solution to the current situation," said the secretary of state, before heading off for Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

"But we are determined that Iraq not be allowed to regain by stonewalling U.N. [arms] inspectors what it has forfeited through its aggression on the battlefield," she said, referring to the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Ahmad Sabah, on a visit to Egypt, said his country was opposed to military action although he urged Iraq to abide by U.N. resolutions.

"We do not support any military action against Iraq or by Iraq," he said after talks with President Hosni Mubarak. "We urge all the responsible forces to observe moderation and wisdom."

The aircraft carrier USS George Washington was sailing through the Suez Canal on Sunday in its way to the Red Sea to join the American armada in the Gulf.

On Friday, President Bill Clinton ordered the aircraft carrier dispatched to the Gulf amid rising tensions with Iraq over the expulsion of the American experts working with U.N. weapons inspectors.

The carrier was expected to exit the canal into the Gulf of Suez later Sunday.

The vessel carries some 75 aircraft and it will take two days to reach the Gulf. The carrier USS Nimitz and 16 other navy vessels are in the Gulf.

About 200 warplanes are in the area some of them enforcing a no-fly zone created after the Gulf war to prevent Iraqi government forces from attacking rebel Shiites in the southern marsh areas of Iraq.

The most recent deployment came in September, when a squadron of about 20 F-15 and F-16 fighter jets arrived in Bahrain from Mountain Home air force base in Idaho. A Patriot missile battery also was deployed, but the it was taken away in October. Military officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said additional forces could be shifted in.

The government in Bahrain, another country on Ms. Albright's tour, called for "restraint and cooperation... to defuse the crisis and create the atmosphere for a diplomatic settlement."

Syria also warned the U.S. against any attack on Iraq, stressing that the Arab World was opposed to military action to resolve the crisis over arms inspections by the U.N.

Damascus was a member of the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf War.

Official newspapers in Baghdad, meanwhile, said even a

military showdown with Washington could not force it to back down on U.N. arms inspections and its campaign to lift economic sanctions in force since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"Before a confrontation even takes place, we have succeeded in assuring the conditions for our victory," said the official daily Al-Jumhuriya.

"The U.S. giant... despite its sophisticated arms is encircled and isolated as it tries to hit Iraq, which is calling for dialogue and wants to avoid a confrontation," it said.

Al-Jumhuriya also referred to opposition to a military strike from France, Russia and China, despite British backing for the tough stand adopted by the U.S. which is sending a second aircraft carrier to the Gulf.

But French President Jacques Chirac has expressed "solidarity with the United States in this crisis," in a telephone call to U.S. counterpart Bill Clinton, a spokeswoman for Mr. Chirac said.

She said he also put forward possible ways of resolving the crisis, while underlining French support for the U.N. oil-for-food deal which allows Iraq to export limited amounts of crude oil to finance humanitarian imports.

And Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Mr. Clinton agreed Sunday that diplomatic means were the most important in resolving the dispute with Iraq, the Kremlin said.

On Saturday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Said Sahhaf said Baghdad would welcome any initiative from Jordan or Egypt, two Arab states with close ties to Washington.

Parliament to convene Nov. 29

(Continued from page 1)

Party (NCP) also confirmed yesterday that it is working on its own bloc, that would include the two official NCP representatives as well as around 15 "stealth" candidates, who won the Nov. 4 elections as independents.

Jordanian Arab Baath Socialist Party Secretary General Khalil Haddadin (Amman's 3rd District) is reportedly finalising a leftist bloc, to include the seven leftist deputies in the 13th legislature as well as progressive independents.

The boycott of the Nov. 4 elections by the Muslim Brotherhood and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), and the resulting prevalence of tribal figures and independents, resulted in a nearly homogeneous Parliament, observers noted.

The seven Islamists who won in this month's elections — Mohammad Azaydeh (Mada'ba), Abdul Majeed Aqtash (Amman's 2nd District), Abdul Razzaq Tubeisat (Irbid), Bakhit Mana'ya (Southern Bedouins), Mohammad Rafat (Balqa), Walid Awajan (Ma'an), and Abdullah Akaleh (Tafilah) — are divided vis-a-vis thorny issues like the peace process and economic reforms, which makes it impossible for

them to form a unified bloc, observers said.

Furthermore, two of them, Messrs. Mr. Rafat and Mr. Awajan, have already joined the National Bloc.

Deputies agree that, apart from Mr. Haddadin's bloc, the others, though still in the making, are going to have almost identical features.

"As most Lower House members are independents, I expect at least three blocs of the same shade, that will be very close to and cooperative with each other," Mr. Srour told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview Sunday.

Though decisive negotiations are scheduled for today (Monday), Mr. Srour said he expected 20-25 deputies to join his bloc.

Both Mr. Abul Ragheb and NCP Secretary General Abdul Hadi Majali, meanwhile, declined to comment on the number of deputies who are likely to join their blocs, and said they expected negotiations with other deputies to be concluded by Tuesday.

Mr. Majali noted that the formation of parliamentary blocs will be a decisive factor on the number of deputies competing for the speakership of the House. Once the blocs crystallise and choose their candidate, it will be much clearer

who, among the current dozen informal candidates for speakership, has better chances, he suggested.

The NCP candidate for speakership, however, "will be decided by the bloc," Mr. Majali stressed, defusing Arabic press reports that both him and former Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh (Irbid), the second NCP official representative, would be competing for speakership.

Mr. Abul Ragheb and Mr. Srour confirmed yesterday that they intend to run for speakership, together with Islamist Abdullah Akaleh (Tafilah) and former Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughumi (Ma'arra).

Dr. Akaleh, an IAF leader and former Muslim Brotherhood member, who was recently expelled from the movement for his decision to run in the elections defying the boycott directive, told the Jordan Times yesterday that he has not yet decided which parliamentary bloc to join, if any.

Describing the blocs currently in the making as "not permanent," Dr. Akaleh said coalitions and divisions in the 13th Parliament will be clearer after the election of the House Speaker, which, according to parliamentary regulations, should take place during the first parliamentary session.

Jordan Design & Trade Center announces



Magical Weavings
an exhibition of Wall Hangings and Rugs
Bashar Kathem & other artists

[this exhibition runs from November 13th - December 4th]

Jordan Design & Trade Center
Noor Al Hussein Foundation
Tel. 699141/2 Opening hours 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM
[Off Wadi Sagra Street, between King Abdullah Gardens & Safeway,
2nd right after gas station]



U.S. sees no quick announcement about successor to Doha forum

The report, to be published in early 1998, said the combined Arab budget deficit was cut to 3.2 per cent of gross domestic product from 4.2 per cent and the current account deficit to less than two per cent from 3.5 per cent.

They could not determine whether this was the result of temporary factors such as low import price inflation or permanent elements such as structural changes in the labour market due to globalisation of the economy and increased productivity.

They finally agreed that "in the end, only time will resolve this puzzle."

giving full details of age, qualifications, experience and salaries drawn, along with a recent passport size photograph and contact telephone numbers.

- Sale is conducted by sealed bid.
- All property is sold on as-is, where-is, non-returnable basis for cash payment without refund or warranty.
- Bid forms and list of lots will be available at time of sale.
- All items will be available for inspection at sale time.
- A deposit of 20% of the total bid is required at time of bid in cash JD only.
- All bids must be deposited by 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 20.
- All bidders will be notified and deposit refunded to unsuccessful bidders by Sunday, November 23.
- All properties must be paid for and removed by Monday, November 24.
- If not removed by November 24, a storage fee of JD50.000 per day for each lot will be imposed.

NEW DELHI (AFP)—India has agreed to cut trade restrictions in separate agreements with its largest trading partner, the European Union (EU), and Australia, officials here said.

Commerce Minister Boola Bul Ramiah told the Economic Times business daily that the agreement with the

(February 20 to March 20) You are very lucky, especially in travel, romance and games of chance. You're not much of a gambler, but sometimes you're willing to take a risk. Don't bet the rent money, of course, but you might make a little wager on the side. It looks like your hunch could be valid?

47 "But — on forever"	53 Actress Magnani
48 Confound	54 Challenge
49 Extract by force	55 Med. sch. subj.
50 Intimidated	56 New Haven campus
51 Actress Foch	59 中国
52 Seen	

Answer: Collecting bridge fees all day can do this—
TAKE ITS TOLL.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

German expert sees golden opportunity for Jordanian manufacturers of clothes

A GERMAN expert in manufacturing and marketing clothes has called on Jordanian industrialists to hasten in entering the German and European markets and in looking for German partners to market Jordanian clothing as a result of increasing need for such products due to declining imports from China and South East Asian countries.

According to the expert, Karl Henry Schwartz, the major clothing businesses in Germany are not satisfied with the Chinese and Asian products as they are not meeting the need of German consumer who spends about DM2,000 on clothing each year.

Mr. Schwartz indicated in a lecture that German manufacturing of clothing is expected to totally fade by the year 2000 when the market will then become totally dependent on imports of quality clothing. The lecturer provided figures and facts to emphasize that the German market is a promising market for Jordan, and the Middle East in general. He pointed out that the clothing retail sector in Germany suffered an estimated DM20 billion loss during the past three years.

He indicated that a declining quality of Chinese clothing, as a result of using outdated machinery, and the distance fac-

tor were among the reasons that caused that loss and prompted Germans to start looking for non-traditional markets outside China, Taiwan and South East Asian countries.

Mr. Schwartz urged Jordanian industrialists to start a promotion campaign through German publications specialised in clothing and to effectively participate in exhibitions and fairs which represent golden opportunities to make direct contacts with German traders. "Industrialists involved in manufacturing clothes in Jordan can start producing according to demand in the first stage before moving later on to intensive production to satisfy the needs of the German market."

Ziad Homs, board member of the Amman Chamber of Industry, told the audience that Jordan's exports of textiles and clothing amounted to JD1 million in 1995. Imports amounted to around JD133 million in both 1995 and 1996. Mr. Homs pointed out that Jordanian textile and clothing exports are reaching around 75 countries and that the sector comprises 1,200 establishments which have a JD112 million registered capital and employ 12,000 regular workers (Al Dustour).

Phillips Petroleum, Qatar sign \$825m deal to build petrochemical complex

DOHA (AP) — The Oklahoma-headquartered Phillips Petroleum Co. Sunday signed a \$825 million deal with Qatar to build a petrochemical complex.

It was the second contract signed within hours of the opening of this year's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference in Qatar, which is sitting on the world's third largest reserves of natural gas. It also produces oil.

Earlier in the day, Israel and Jordan signed a pact to create a special industrial trade zone in the Jordanian city of Irbid. Products made in the zone will be allowed duty-free into the United States.

America's Mobil Oil was expected to sign its own contract on Monday with the Qatar Shipping Co.

U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley, who is leading the American delegation to the conference, told reporters that two other deals involving American companies were expected to be signed before the conference ends Tuesday: — Atlantic Richfield

Co., or ARCO, headquartered in Los Angeles, will extend the contract on its "mobile mini refinery" to a Qatari company until a permanent facility is built. The total deal was valued at \$60 million.

The New England Medical Clinic, affiliated with Tufts University Medical School, will design and organise a cancer clinic for the Qatari government. The contract is for \$7.5 million.

Mr. Daley told a news conference that the deals were examples of "the tremendous business opportunities in the region."

He urged the governments in the Middle East to continue with programmes of economic reform and efforts to reduce trade barriers.

He noted that investors will be more interested in putting their money in a unified region of 300 million people than in individual countries.

The Phillips deal was signed with the state-run Qatar General Petroleum Corp., which will hold a 51 per cent controlling interest in the joint venture.

It aims at the construction of a chemical complex in Mesaed industrial area, which is about 30 kilometres south of the capital Doha, by the year 2001. It will be fed with natural gas from the North Field, Qatar's largest gas field.

The complex will produce 500,000 tonnes per year of ethylene, a state-owned said. It also will make polyethylene, which is used in plastics.

The deal was signed by Wayne Allen, chairman of the Bartlesville, Oklahoma, company and Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Attiyah, Qatar's minister of energy and industry.

Mr. Allen told a news conference that it was "a very significant petrochemical project."

Earlier, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright presided over the Jordanian-Israeli signing ceremony.

She termed it "a milestone in the implementation of peace and a tangible demonstration of the benefits of peace."

The agreement creates a "qualified industrial zone" in Irbid where companies set up by

Israeli and Jordanian businessmen will be allowed to export their products to the U.S. duty free.

The deal still must be approved by the U.S. trade representative's office in Washington, but American officials said this was expected soon.

Qatar wants to use the conference to showcase its energy industry.

The country has an estimated seven trillion cubic metres of proven gas reserves, which it hopes to develop extensively over the next five years. This is third only to Russia and Iran. It currently is producing more than 13 billion cubic metres of gas a year.

Its oil reserves stand at 3.7 billion barrels, and production is at a rate of about 670,000 barrels a day, well above Qatar's OPEC quota of 378,000 barrels per day.

The oil and gas and associated industries have made Qatar one of the richest countries in the world, with a per capita income of \$17,400.

Gold prices plunge on rumours of central bank selling

LONDON (AFP) — Gold prices have plunged to a fresh 12-and-a-half-year low, after a wave of selling was unleashed by rumours of bullion disposals by central banks, dealers said.

The price of gold on the London Bullion Market dived \$6.10 to \$301.55 per ounce, having earlier crashed below the \$300 barrier for a brief period.

"Rumours of selling by one or several central banks are circulating on the market," said Tony Warwick-Ching, an analyst from trading house Fleming Global Mining. "These are only rumours, of course, but quite often these rumours are true."

In the current pessimistic environment, dealers seized on the rumours as a pretext to sell massively, causing the price of the precious metal to dive momentarily to \$299.75 per ounce. The last time gold fell beneath \$300 an ounce was in March 1985.

For several weeks, the gold market has been deep in gloom because of the spectre of central bank bullion sales, economic problems in Asia and the strength of the dollar.

The turmoil on world stocks has also buffeted the precious metal, despite its traditional role as a safe haven.

Switzerland's announcement three weeks ago of a plan to sell 1,400 tonnes of strategic gold reserves held by the Swiss National Bank, more than half of the bank's total stocks, drove prices down to a 12-and-a-half year low.

Although the Swiss subsequently said they would sell only 950 tonnes, and the sale will be spread out over a period of years, it reinforced underlying anxiety that central bankers seem increasingly disposed to offload gold stocks in favour of higher-yielding assets like U.S. Japanese or German bonds.

The Bundesbank on Wednesday confirmed that it had loaned some of its gold reserves on the London Bullion Market.

Although the German central bank denied any plans to sell part of its strategic stocks, traders remained pessimistic, noting that it was the first time the Bundesbank had confirmed market rumours of this kind.

Last week, a senior European Union monetary official hinted that the future European Central Bank (ECB) may not need to keep any of the gold reserves of countries launching the single European currency on Jan. 1, 1999.

The official, who is involved in the setting up of the ECB, said that all options on the gold issue had to be "kept open at the moment."

"The threat of central bank selling will continue to weigh on the gold market for a long time," the Fleming Global Mining analyst said.

The intense volatility on global stock markets in recent weeks also discouraged investors from taking up long-term positions in gold, which weighed on prices, making them very vulnerable to sudden profit-taking.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 16/11/97 16:43									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar		1.7330	0.9812	1.4045	125.34	1.4087	1692.00	1.9523	5.7875
DE Mark	0.5770		0.3409	0.9105	72.51	0.8126	976.06	1.1288	3.3394
GB Sterling	1.6915	2.9295		2.3759	214.94	2.3828	2862.02	3.3023	9.7896
CH Franc	0.7120	1.2330	0.4205		88.20	1.0023	1203.84	139.02	4.1178
JP Yen	0.0080	1.3821	0.4713	1.1201		1.1235	13.48	155.70	4.6156
CA Dollar	0.7089	1.2259	0.4178	0.9934	1.12		1199.50	1.3817	4.1028
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0236	0.3491	0.8030	1351.90	0.8321		11.53	3.4185
NL Guilder	0.5122	88.72	0.3026	71.93	64.15	0.7212	866.23		2.9629
FR Franc	0.1728	0.2993	0.1021	24.2584	21.63	0.2433	33.72	33.7200	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar		1.7330	3.7504	0.3770	3.6388	0.3033	3.6728	1534.50	3.3910
Jordan Dinar	1.4124		5.2972	0.5325	5.1410	0.4284	5.1678	2167.37	4.7895
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888		0.1005	0.97	0.0809	0.88	408.16	0.9042
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	9.9480		9.65	0.8045	9.74	4070.29	8.9646
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304		0.0833	1.01	421.59	0.9316
Kuwait Dinar	3.2971	2.3343	12.3683	1.2430	12.00		12.11	5059.35	0.9316
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0226	0.9910	0.0826		417.80	0.9233
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4614	2.4441	0.2457	2.3720	0.1977	2.3935		2.2098
Egyptian	0.2949	0.2088	1.1080	0.1112	1.0734	0.0894	1.0831	452.53	

Energy									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
Brent	20.47	19.87							
W. Texas	20.48	20.73							
Bonny	20.47	19.87							
Dubai	18.75	18.85							
U.L. Gas	198.00	195.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4622	0.15763	0.37478	33.4336				
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47199	0.16097	0.38287	34.1402				
KW Dinar	3.2971	5.71429	1.94932	4.83392	413.394				
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.5977	1.56814	3.72856	332.557				
CY Pound	1.9609	3.3982	1.1589	2.7541	245.779				

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	1M	3M	6M	9M	1Y	2Y	3Y	4Y	5Y
USD	5.56	5.75	5.78	5.81	5.83				
GBP	7.37	7.55	7.68	7.74	7.80				
JPY	0.20	0.07	0.07	0.18	0.22				
DEM	3.43	3.50	3.75	3.90	4.03				
FRF	3.21	3.58	3.73	3.87	3.84				
CHF	1.43	1.75	1.84	2.08	2.18				
ITL	6.49	6.45	5.90	5.59	5.40				

Energy									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
Coffee (c/lbs)	157								
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1846								
Sugar (\$/ton)	306.5								
Wheat (\$/ton)	135.7								
Soya (c/lbs)	26.57								
Tea (c/lbs)	155								
Barley (\$/bsh)	0								
Rice (\$/ton)	390								

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHAMSANI										
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 16/11/1997										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / R	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADS.	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
346,000	241,000	ANAB BANK	15.2	1.21	7	150	52810	330.50	330.00	-50-
N 1,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	17	61820	112512	1.81	1.82	01+
3,600	2,760	BANK OF JORDAN	6.7	0.00	8	6751	21577	3.15	3.20	05+
1,190	890	KID. EAST INV. BK.	70.9	0.00	1	500	540	1.08	1.08	02+
2,680	2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.3	6.11	2	750	1943	2.61	2.59	02+
S 5,200	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.2	3.80	6	5924	30210	5.10	5.10	-
4,180	2,150	JOR. KHALAT BANK	11.6	0.00	1	150	109	2.15	2.18	-03+
1,050	740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.6	8.97	1	500	390	7.78	7.78	-
4,050	3,430	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.4	3.17	86	44588	169485	3.78	3.79	01+
1,530	1,110	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	7	0.00	2	1500	1800	1.18	1.20	-03+
1,900	870	BRIT. AL-WAL (BRITWA)	6	16.30	5	1250	1127	89	92	03+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS										
2,020	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.3	7.94	1	250	473	1.875	1.89	-02+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS										
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.2	5.26	7	4527	8569	1.90	1.90	-
1,550	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	4	1750	2048	1.18	1.17	-01-
1,010	820	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.6	6.59	2	6000	5460	92	91	-01-
1,680	1,160	KID. EAST TRV. BK.	70.4	0.00	1	500	540	1.08	1.08	-
1,050	950	JORDAN EXPRAT. INV.	9	0.00	1	200	180	95	90	-05-
1,100	900	KARJA EDUCATION	9	0.00	9	3125	2970	95	95	-
2,230	1,530	UNION BANK	7	0.00	2	1500	1800	1.18	1.20	01+
950	640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	1	150	105	70	70	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS										
4,450	3,030	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	21.1	3.50	13	1997	6256	3.13	3.14	01+
7,050	5,870	ANAB POTASH CO.	14.9	3.13	2	350	2240	6.50	6.40	-10-
11,150	9,070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.4	8.27	2	1050	11285	10.73	10.75	-02+
3,260	1,330	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	9	0.00	6	10300	14317	1.37	1.39	-02+
4,700	3,040	JOR. PETROL. REFIN.	11.6	4.75	9	897	3773	4.20	4.21	-01+
1,700	1,020	JOR. PIPES MANUF.	17.0	5.84	35	14550	19532	1.30	1.37	-07+
1,480	1,050	RAFIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	3	650	866	1.36	1.33	-03+
6,000	4,300	DAR ALHANNI DV. INV.	12.6	4.50	2	650	3008	5.60	5.55	-05-
3,850	2,220	ANAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.42	1	250	600	2.38	2.40	-02+
690	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.9	0.00	10	6000	2820	48	47	-01-
2,970	1,400	JUN. CEMENT IND.	12.8	7.04	4	800	1121	1.41	1.42	-01+
3,000	1,860	WAT. CABLE WIRE. MPAC	30.5	0.00	2	250	473	1.875	1.89	-01-
890	530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEN	9	0.00	8	9000	2973	60	60	-
1,480	800	KANUNER INVEST.	61.1	0.00	1	200	124	62	62	-
1,580	950	UNIV. MOOV. INDUS.	9	0.00	7	2850	282	99	99	-
1,070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.1	0.00	8	9000	5324	88	88	-
2,090	1,340	EL - KAT READY WEAR	49.3	0.00	1	6500	7000	1.41	1.40	-01-
1,330	1,050	IND. TRV. INVEST.	15.2	6.57	7	1950	2412	1.22	1.22	-
810	710	JORDAN STEEL	34.4	6.58	2	3200	2432	76	76	-
840	570	KID. EAST COMPLEX	7.3	16.95	25	31700	18581	59	59	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS										
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 171.76 %CHG: -0.25	321	236580	524282					
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 16/11/1997										
630	300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	3	6900	2277	32	33	01+
610	370	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.4	0.00	1	100	39	38	39	01+
800	660	UNION INV.	9	0.00	14	48172	12047	74	76	02+
570	360	ANAB FCM INVEST.	9	0.00	9	51200	20480	80	80	04+
690	440	ANAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	2	1550	698	44	45	01+
530	320	ANAB INTL. INV. TRD.	38.0	0.00	6	15500	5115	32	33	01+
640	330	KAT. TEXTILE	9	0.00	5	2500	2505	33	33	-
750	390	KAT. MULT. ENG. MARICO	9	0.00	5	14000	5500	40	40	-
520	450	ANAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	1	3000	1290	45	43	-02-
500	320	KAT. FARM.	9	0.00	6	1213	801	33	33	-
470	290	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	5	2000	2460	30	30	-
860	620	INDS. CERAMIC	16.8	0.00	1	150	95	62	63	-01+
820	590	KAT. FARM.	9	0.00	1	2000	1220	51	51	-01+
N 1,000	660	WAT. ALUMINUM. 75%	91.5	0.00	11	9400	3854	67	66	-01-
GRAND TOTAL										
72 169945 58681										
* New 12 months low										
* Stock divided during the past 12 months										
* Listed during the past 12 months										
P/R ratio is 100 or more										
+ Negative P/R										
E Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year										

Jordan's delegation to Southwest Asian Games leaves for Tehran today

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's delegation to the Southwest Asian Games leaves for Tehran, Iran Monday to take part in the Nov. 17-28 event bringing together 12 countries competing in 17 sports.

Twenty one athletes are part of Jordan's 39-member delegation competing in 8 events: Athletics, boxing, fencing, badminton, tennis, wrestling, weightlifting and judo.

The games also include basketball, karate, table tennis, soccer, handball, taekwondo and swimming.

Jordan pulled out of the shooting event while the organising committee cancelled cycling and gymnastics in which Jordan was to have competed.

The first ever West Asian Games — open to men's teams only — will bring together athletes from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, Jordan and Iran.

While the Iranian Olympic Committee will be covering accommodation leaving only air-fare to be paid by the respective participating countries, many Jordanian federations have shied away, unable to cover the needed expenses.

Among the Kingdom's declining federations are equestrian, handball, basketball, volleyball shooting and table tennis.

Onlookers had criticised the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) for asking the over-burdened federations to cover expenses when their annual

budgets do not correspond with their expenses — a fact that leads many excellent federations to miss participation.

However, in an effort to increase the Kingdom's competitive chances, the JOC decided to sponsor excellent players by sponsoring medal-winning athletes at July's Pan-Arab Games, while the rest of the participating federations will cover their own expenses.

Jordan took a total of 40 medals, including 10 gold, 8 silver and 22 bronze medals to finish fifth among the 19 participating countries gaining more gold medals in Beirut than in the past seven Pan-Arab Games altogether, and capping the best Jordanian participation since the event was first held in 1953.

Twelve medal-winners are included in the delegation including Fakhruddin Fuad and Tareq Najjar (athletics), Mousa Khalaf (judo), Mohammad Abu Khadijeh, Ayman Nadi, Kamal Abdul Hamid, Khalidoun Abdul Hamid and Basel Hindawi (boxing), Abdul Hakim Abu Sneh and Ismail Sheikh (wrestling), Ayed Khawaldeh (weightlifting), and Amer Natour (fencing).

Three of the federations participating in the Tehran Games were impressive in Beirut.

The boxing, athletics and weightlifting teams earned five medals each while the wrestlers took four. Judo and fencing earned a medal each.

On the other hand, the competitive form of some of the participating federations who did not take part in Beirut is unknown. Those include badminton and tennis.

Some of the declining federations had either impressive results at the Pan-Arab Games or are

considered to have good teams that should be best prepared for the 9th Pan-Arab Games in 2001 which will be held in Jordan.

Table tennis took two bronze medals in both the doubles and the team event.

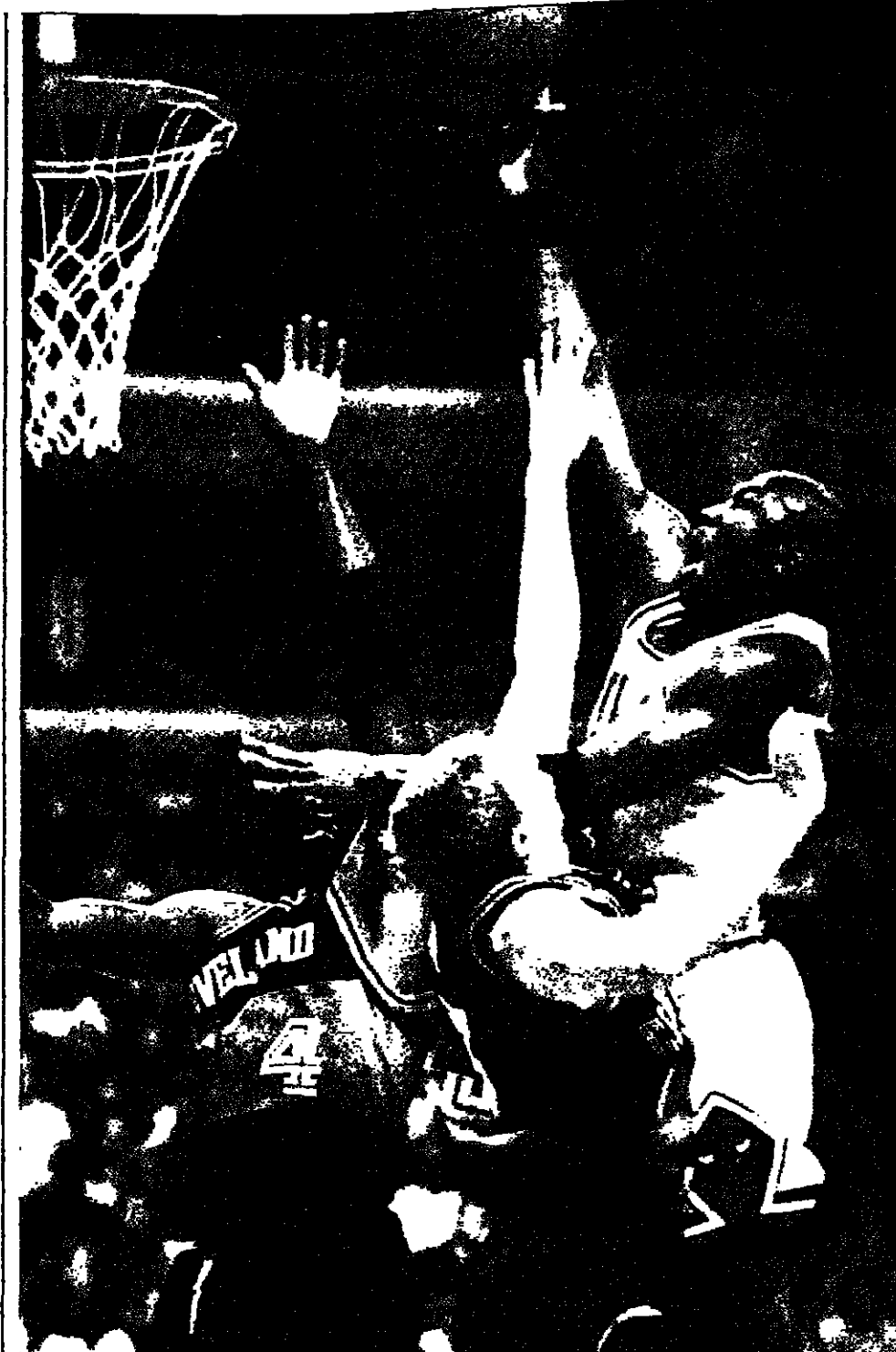
While basketball failed to earn a medal, Jordan has regrouped a new line-up of young stars who finished 6th in Lebanon and 7th in the recently-concluded Asian Championship. Jordan was Arab Champion in the 1985 Pan-Arab Games.

The shooting team only declined last week. Though unimpressive and easily eliminated in Beirut, the team was to have been represented by athletes from the armed forces and Public Security Department.

Also missing the event are the handball and equestrian teams as well as Jordan's soccer team who won the gold medal at the Pan-Arab Games.

Following are the names of athletes of Jordan's delegation

- Boxing: Mohammad Abu Khadijeh, Ayman Nadi, Kamal Abdul Hamid, Khalidoun Abdul Hamid and Basel Hindawi.
- Judo: Mousa Khalaf.
- Athletics: Fakhruddin Fuad, Tareq Najjar, Salameh Abdul Karim and Awad Sreis.
- Weightlifting: Ayed Khawaldeh.
- Wrestling: Abdul Hakim Abu Sneh and Ismail Sheikh.
- Fencing: Amer Natour.
- Badminton: Mueen Taha, Wael Mohammad, Rami Halaseh and Tareq Mansour.
- Tennis: Ahmad Hadid, Leith Azzouni and Faris Azzouni.



Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan get a shot off over the top of Cleveland Cavaliers' Shawn Kemp and Bob Sura during their NBA game at the United Center. Jordan hit just one field goal in nine attempts in the quarter (Reuters photo)

NBA RESULTS

Indiana	105	Toronto	77
Charlotte	130	LA Clippers	96
Detroit	96	New Jersey	88 (OT)
Miami	96	Denver	93
New York	114	Sacramento	87
Boston	107	Philadelphia	101
Orlando	102	Washington	91
Chicago	79	Cleveland	70
Utah	85	Dallas	77
Minnesota	105	San Antonio	94
Portland	99	Golden State	87
Vancouver	109	Milwaukee	94

World Cup playoffs

Casiraghi guides Italy to win

NAPLES (AFP) — Lazio striker Pierluigi Casiraghi guided Italy into the 1998 World Cup finals here Saturday night by scoring in the 53rd minute to clinch a tense 1-0 victory over Russia.

Casiraghi's goal, which sent the 70,000 crowd delirious, earned Italy a 2-1 aggregate win in the play-off. The two sides had drawn in Moscow two weeks earlier.

The victory also ended weeks of anguish over whether the 1994 World Cup finalists would make it to France '98, after England pipped them from Group 2.

As a night of celebrations got underway, the Italian players went on a lap of honour around the San Paolo pitch while thousands of fans waved flags and cheered.

However, it was a night best remembered for the result rather than the way Italy performed, which was far from convincing.

Team coach Cesare Maldini admitted that his team had to improve, but insisted it would have been injustice if they had not qualified.

"I've always said that football is about joy, about satisfaction and about bitterness," Maldini said. "And this has given me great joy."

"I want to thank the play-



Italy's Pierluigi Casiraghi (R) gets past Russia's Viktor Onopko to score the first goal in their World Cup qualifying match in Naples. Italy, who won 1-0, had to win or draw 0-0 to qualify for the 1998 World Cup (Reuters photo)

ers for all they have done throughout the qualifying campaign and I want to thank the people of Naples."

As for the match, he said: "It was always clear that we were going to qualify."

"We deserved it — we went through all those qualifying matches and we conceded only one goal: it would have been an injustice if we hadn't gone through."

"Of course, we'll have to think about the squad who we are going to send to France, but for the moment I just want to savour the fact that we've qualified. We've got a lot of time to

improve and to make decisions."

Italian football federation president Luciano Nizzola, who admitted to having feared for the worst this week, said: "It was a very important objective and I'm very pleased we reached it."

Casiraghi, who had also scored both goals when these two sides first met — a 2-1 win for the Italians at last year's European championships in England, was clearly relieved.

"It obviously wasn't a great match," he admitted. "It was a risk match and the Russians have got some great individual players."

Belgians end Irish dreams

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Belgium marched into their fifth straight World Cup finals on Saturday with a 2-1 win over Ireland clinched by a classic piece of opportunism from PSV Eindhoven striker Luc Nilis.

Nilis, scorer of a brilliant equaliser in the first leg in Dublin a fortnight ago, was the hero once again with his 70th minute strike that killed off Ireland's dreams of a third consecutive qualification.

It was a heartbreaking blow for the Irish, who had battled their way back into contention through a 58th minute headed equaliser from Ray Houghton that cancelled out Luis Oliveira's first-half opener for Belgium.

Nilis' goal was a trademark finish by the 30-year-old forward but it was slack Irish marking that allowed him the kind of chance he thrives on.

Eric Verheyen's long throw from the left was allowed to bounce along the edge of the box to an unmarked Gert Claessens.

With his back to goal, Claessens deftly hooked the ball over his shoulder, wrongfooting the Irish defenders but not the ever-alert Nilis, who pounced to slot the ball past Shay Given in the Irish goal.

From then on, Ireland had nothing to lose and threw everyone forward in a vain search for the equaliser that would have put them through to the finals on the away goals rule.

It was not to be, however, as Belgium pulled everyone back behind the ball, even Nilis.

And the frustration felt by the Irish and their 10,000 fans in the King Baudouin stadium boiled over minutes from the end when substitute David Connolly aimed a kick at Gerd Verheyen, leaving the Austrian referee Gunther Benk with no option but to get out his red card.

Connolly, who plays in the Netherlands for Feyenoord, had barely been on the field seven minutes after replacing Mark Kennedy.

It had all looked so much better for the Irish during their strongest period of the match at the start of the second half.

With Houghton on as a substitute for Alan McLoughlin, the Irish set up camp in the Belgian half and the pressure paid off in the 59th minute when the Scots-born midfielder found himself free in the box on the end of Andy Townsend's cross.

Houghton's looping header was almost a carbon copy of the goal he struck to sink England in the 1998 European Championships and looked at the time as if it could be as important as his winner against Italy in the last World Cup finals.

But in the end Ireland did not do enough to deserve an upset victory and were lucky still to be in the match at that point after Belgium were refused a first half penalty.

Brazilian-born striker Oliveira, who had opened the scoring in the 25th minute after a fine through ball from the creative Claessens, before rounding keeper Shay Given, took a pass from midfielder Danny Boffin 25 yards out and ran into the box only to be floored by Wimbledon's Kenny Cunningham.

Austrian referee Gunther Benko blew up for a free kick right on the edge of the box but television replays clearly showed contact was made inside.

Five minutes earlier, veteran Tony Cascarino had squandered Ireland's best chance of the opening period.

Gary Kelly released Jeff Kenna on an overlapping run to the right.

The Blackburn defender's cross found Cascarino free on the penalty spot but the 35-year-old striker mistimed his volley which trickled into the arms of a Filip de Wilde in the Belgian goal.

That proved a costly miss as Nilis finally stuck the knife in with his brilliant winner to give the Belgians their tickets to France and leave the brave Irish rueing what might have been.

Afterwards, a bitterly disappointed Irish manager Mick McCarthy said: "I don't enjoy getting beat. It rankles with me at any time but certain ways disappoint even more."

McCarthy was adamant that the throw which led to the Belgians' winner should have gone the way of his men.



Japan's Hidetoshi Nakata lines up a kick in front of Iranian defender during their Asian group qualifying match in Johor Bahru. Japan qualified to the World Cup finals in France next year after a 3-2 win (Reuters photo)

Yugoslavia book passage with ease

BELGRADE (AFP) — Yugoslavia qualified for the 1998 World Cup finals here on Saturday by destroying Hungary 5-0 in their second leg play-off match, giving them a 12-1 aggregate triumph.

Aston Villa striker Savo Milosevic scored their opener in the 17th minute and then Real Madrid's Predrag Mijatovic blasted the other four to complete the rout before a vociferous 60,000 crowd.

Mijatovic got off the mark on 44 minutes and quickly bagged his second in first half injury time with a penalty awarded after he was brought down in the area by Andros Keresztni just after Kalman Kovacs had fired a rare Hungarian effort wide.

Dejan Savicevic should have made it three five minutes after the restart as the one-way traffic continued but Gabor Babos in the

visitors' goal made a superb stop before Mijatovic hit the post on the hour.

The Real Madrid hitman, who hammered a hat-trick in the first leg, swiftly made amends for that miss with further goals in the 71st and 88th minutes, the final goal coming at the end of a brilliant run.

"I am delighted, this generation of players has proved its mental stability and its talent," said delighted Yugoslav coach Slobodan Santrac.

Yugoslavia will now return to the World Cup finals after an absence of eight years. They reached the quarter-finals in 1990 but lost to Argentina on penalties, while four years ago they were banned from competing because of the war in former Yugoslavia.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 699238	CINEMA TEL: 677420	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	Risham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	NOW ON DAILY
	Fran Drescher & Timothy Dalton ... in	Patrick Stewart & Jonathan Frakes ... in	Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in	Rowan Atkinson... in	ABDOUN	ABDOUN	THE GOVERNMENT IN
	THE BEAUTICIAN & THE BEAST	STAR TREK FIRST CONTACT	AL MASEER (Arabic)	MR. BEAN	Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in	ONE FINE DAY	THE SERVICE
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	OF PEOPLE
			Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival	SLEEP WALKERS	Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival	HERCULES	Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas
				Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00	For reservations call: 640155, 625155

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Brolin joins Palace on loan

LONDON (AFP) — Leeds United reject Tomas Brolin has been offered the chance to return to English football with Premiership rivals Crystal Palace. The Swedish striker is set to join the south London club later this week for a trial with a view to a permanent move. A Palace official said: "Steve Coppell has invited Brolin over for a week. He wants to see what the player's attitude is like and a permanent deal is not out of the question. "Palace have gone to Sweden to play a friendly while there is a break in the Premiership programme this weekend and Steve is hoping to finalise the offer of a trial while he is out there." Brolin was written off by Leeds earlier this season after the former Swedish international fell out with manager George Graham. The Elland Road club lost every penny of the £4.2 million (\$6.5 million) Brolin cost from Parma two years ago. Brolin, who will be 28 at the end of this month, was signed by former manager Howard Wilkinson. He scored just four goals in 27 appearances for the club.

Croatian basketball coach resigns

ZAGREB (AFP) — The coach of the Croatian basketball team, Petar Skansi, resigned on Saturday as coach and selector, Hina news agency reported. He handed in his "irrevocable" resignation, saying that he was not satisfied with the work of the Croatian basketball association and that of the association president Marijan Hanzekovic. It said, Skansi's departure comes just 11 days before the Croatian team is due to play its first qualification game for the European Championships of 1999.

Hereford score 2-1 FA Cup win

LONDON (AFP) — Two goals by Neil Grayson earned Hereford a 2-1 FA Cup first-round win that gave them partial revenge against a Brighton side that had condemned United to life in non-league this season. And Hedsford, who knocked out Blackpool and York last season, were the other non-league victors with a 2-0 win against Mark Hateley's third division strugglers Hull City at Boothferry Park. A Mick Norbury penalty after 38 minutes fired the Conference leaders ahead and Joe O'Connor killed Hull off in the last minute. Hereford, perhaps the most famous giant-killers of all for their 1972 third-round triumph over Newcastle, were desperate to repay the Seagulls after the drama of the final day of last season. A 1-1 draw at Edgar Street on that occasion was enough to keep troubled Brighton in the third division as their rivals' 25 years as a league club came to an end. But with Brighton missing a penalty in this rematch it was Hereford's turn to celebrate as Grayson's double, the second from the spot, earned a potentially lucrative second-round match.

Nike plan 10-year England deal

LONDON (AFP) — Sportswear company Nike are ready to end Umbro's 13-year sponsorship of the England football team kit by offering a deal worth £150 million (\$250 million), it was reported here Sunday. The American giants are preparing a 10-year package and are set to make a move when Umbro's current deal ends in June 1999. Umbro has held the contract with England since 1984 but its current contract is said to be worth five million pounds a year, depending on results. Nike, who already sponsor Arsenal and Rangers and have a lucrative kit deal with England's rugby union team, would pay the Football Association (FA) a massive 15 million pounds a season, according to the News of the World. The FA wants a new agreement in place after the World Cup finals next summer and Nike's proposed deal would be the second biggest in soccer history. The biggest kit deal is also with Nike, who have a 240 million pound 10-year deal with world champions Brazil.

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Pete Sampras of the United States celebrates after winning the final match of the Tennis World Championships against Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia in Hanover, November 16. Sampras won 6-3 6-2 6-2 (Reuters photo)

Sampras stuns Kafelnikov for year-end crown

HANOVER (AFP) — Pete Sampras capped a record-setting year Sunday, defeating Yevgeny Kafelnikov 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 to win the \$3.3 million ATP World Championships and crowning his achievement by notching a fifth straight season at No. 1 in the world. The 26-year-old American, one of the best to play the game and holder of 10 Grand Slam titles, overcame a break-strawn first set to impose his will on the sixth-ranked Russian. Sampras swept to a fourth title at the eight-man, end-of-season event in one hour, 27 minutes, wrapping things nicely with his 16th ace. The choppy opening set featured five breaks in the first eight games, with Sampras winning on three of the five break point chances he held against Kafelnikov. The American took a 5-3 margin from the Russian's serve and then held his own to grab a 6-3 lead after 33 minutes in front of a 15,000-strong sellout crowd which included German supermodel Claudia Schiffer and former Formula One driver Niki Lauda. Sampras increased the tension in the second set, running away with a 5-2 lead as Kafelnikov struggled to find form against the American juggernaut. Sampras clinched the second set with his 12th ace of the afternoon after just 59 minutes on court. He began the third set with a break of the fading Russian and was never again troubled. The multi-millionaire, collected cheque for \$1.44 million to improve his career prize money total to better than \$32 million. The 630 rankings points he received solidifies his status at the top of the rankings even further. The Sampras victory on barcourt was the 52nd title (20th indoors) of his career and his five-year run atop the rankings ties that of Jimmy Connors, who completed the feat in the 1970s. Less than an hour before the start of the finale, the ATP Tour announced Sampras had been named the best player of the last 25 years in a poll conducted to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ATP. The American received 779 points ahead of Swedish tennis icon Bjorn Borg (754), John McEnroe (721), Jimmy Connors (634) and Ivan Lendl (493).

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Wihdat crash out of 13th Arab Champions Cup

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

JORDAN'S AL WIH DAT Sunday crashed out of the 13th Arab Champions Cup when they were beaten 7-0 by Algeria's Widad Talmasan in their second match of the tournament currently underway in Tunisia. Al Wihdat had to beat their Algerian counterparts to secure qualification to the second round after their 3-1 defeat to Saudi Arabia's Ahli Jeddah in the opening. However, it was evident from the onset of the match that would not be the case as the Algerian team who had held hosts Al Afriqi of Tunisia to a 0-0 draw on the opening day were clearly determined to come out victorious. Widad's players took a 2-0 lead at halftime and went on a scoring spree aided by the defensive errors of the Jordanian team whose all-out attack left open gaps from which their opponents scored easy goals. Al Wihdat were reduced to 10 men after Samir Bahloz got a red card booking and at least two goals were contested as off-side by their players.

Al Wihdat face hosts Al Afriqi in their next match Tuesday. The eight team championship which concludes Nov. 23, groups Al Wihdat in Group A alongside Ahli Jeddah, Widad Talmasan and Al Afriqi. Group B includes Al Safqasi of Tunisia, Egypt's Al Ahli, Kuwait's Kathima, and Al Am'ari of Palestine. The top two teams of each group will advance to the second round which starts Nov. 21 and the championship concludes Nov. 23. In other matches, Egypt's Al Ahli scored a 7-0 win over Al Am'ari, while Tunisia's Al Safqasi beat Kuwait's Kathima 3-1. While Al Wihdat's local record has been especially impressive this year, the Jordanian titleholders are clearly facing more experienced teams with professional players on their lineups. Trained by Iraqi coach Anwar Jassam, Al Wihdat have an unbeaten record in the Premier League which they currently lead halfway through. They also reached the semifinals of the Jordan Cup alongside Al Hussein, Al Ramtha and Al Faisali. Earlier in the year, Al Wihdat also

took part in the Cup Winners' Cup in Cairo and were impressive against well-known teams. Playing their third Champions Cup, Al Wihdat have now lost the chance to qualify to the second round of the championship which has been dominated by Saudi and Iraqi teams in 9 of the past 12 championships. This is the only the fourth time Jordanian teams take part in the Champions Cup. Al Ahli took part in the inaugural competition in 1981 finishing last among the three competing teams. Al Faisali were the only Jordanian team to advance to the second round in 1993. Al Hussein played in the 1993 Cup, while Al Wihdat took part 1995 and 1996. The winning team will receive \$50,000, the runner-up \$30,000, while the third and fourth finishers will split \$25,000. Each competing team will get \$5,000 from the Arab Soccer Federation who have also covered air-fare and accommodation.

China's swimmers are drug free — FINA

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The world swimming body FINA has again leaped to the defence of China's swimmers over their new record breaking performances which have raised new drug allegations. "Until one swimmer is caught using the banned substance, we can't say they are on drugs. All I can say now is to congratulate them for a fine performance," Eldon Godfrey, FINA bureau member, said at the world junior diving championships in Penang. "Athletes should enjoy his or her moment of success without anyone casting doubt on their performance. Don't speculate without any proof," Godfrey added. Australian swimming coach Don Talbot said last month that Chinese swimmers are drug cheats and rejected attempts by the world swimming governing body to defend China. Seven Chinese swimmers failed drug tests at the 1994 Asian Games in Japan, causing one of the biggest doping scandals in sporting history.



Martina Hingis returns a shot to Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in the Advanta Championships in Villanova. Hingis won the match 1-6, 7-6, 6-3 (Reuters photo)

Hingis beats Sanchez to reach final

PHILADELPHIA (AFP) — Swiss teenager Martina Hingis shook off a lackluster start to outlast eighth-seeded Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 1-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 Saturday and reach a showdown with American Lindsay Davenport in the final of the WTA Tour event here. Hingis, who rallied from a 1-4 deficit in the second set, will be bidding for her 12th WTA Tour title of the year on Sunday when she faces the big-hitting 21-year-old Davenport who

outplayed Romanian Irina Spirlea 6-4, 6-2 in Saturday's other semi-final. In just 15 tournaments this year, the 17-year-old Hingis, who will be a favourite at next week's season-ending WTA Finals in New York, has come away with 11 singles titles. She has also won 76 of the 80 matches she has played and pocketed over \$3 million in prizemoney.

Davenport, who won her sixth title of the year in Chicago last weekend and who has risen to third in the world rankings, will be appearing in her eighth final of the year. She has continued to post excellent form here all week and put out defending champion Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic in the quarter-finals.

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front of Iranian defender during the... Japan qualified to the World Cup... (Reuters photo)

THE GOVERNMENT
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Opposition warns U.S. against attacking Iraq

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian opposition parties Sunday warned against any U.S. military attack to resolve the standoff with Iraq and said that such a move would put U.S. interests in the region at stake.

Representatives of 12 parties, professional unions and independent personalities urged Arab states to hold a session of the 22-member Arab League to discuss the escalating tension between Baghdad and the U.S.

"The embargo against Iraq was enforced by the U.S. to achieve its aggressive objectives aimed at humiliating the Arab Nation... and to ensure the Zionist-American supremacy," said Fou'ad Dabour, secretary general of the Progressive Ba'ath Party during a press conference.

"We say that U.S. interests in the region will not be secure if Iraq was targeted by a U.S. attack," said Mimir Sharayyah, member of the Popular Unity Party.

Hamzeh Mansour, former MP and spokesman of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), said that he supports a call by an Iraqi newspaper to retaliate against U.S. interests if Iraq is attacked by the U.S.

"All American and British interests in the region, whether embassies of the two countries or their warships,



Hamzeh Mansour

must become the target of armed attacks by Arab nationalist forces," the Iraqi Babel newspaper, owned by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, said in an editorial Saturday.

"I look forward to a joint Arab-Iraqi effort to defend the Arab lands and interests with all possible means," said Mr. Mansour.

"America is using weapons of mass destruction against Iraq and we are still issuing statements here and there. I am for the Iraqi newspaper's call to answer the American aggression," he said. "The hearts of our masses are charged with fury and look for a chance to express their anger," added Mr. Mansour.

But Salem Nahhas, secretary general of the Popular Democratic Party (Hasbi), said that the parties "are not going to take such actions against U.S. interests" in Jordan.

Mohammad Oweidah, IAF member, said that any U.S. strike against Iraq "will be the flame that would draw a strong reaction from Arab and Muslim public opinion against U.S. interests."

The opposition parties called upon workers in all Arab airports and ports to boycott U.S. planes and ships as a form of protest against the U.S. anti-Iraq threats.

The coalition of the opposition factions, which includes Islamic, pan-Arab and leftist parties, said that they will resort to all peaceful means to express their dissatisfaction over U.S. threats against Iraq.

Mr. Mansour told the press conference that the parties have visited several Arab and foreign embassies and urged them to denounce U.S. actions.

He said that they have visited Syrian, Iranian, Egyptian and other embassies to urge these countries to assist Iraq in its confrontation with the U.S.

Mr. Mansour said that Iranian ambassador promised that the U.S.-Iraq crisis "will be on the agenda of the Islamic conference in Tehran," scheduled to be held in December.

Dr. Oweidah said that a procession by these parties will be held in Amman in solidarity with Iraq on Thursday. He did not say whether they have received permission from the authorities to hold such a rally.

Palestinian mourners, Israeli soldiers clash after funeral of nine-year-old

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Clashes broke out between Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers on Sunday in the West Bank town of Bethlehem as mourners buried a Palestinian boy shot dead by soldiers last week.

During the funeral of Ali Jawarish, a group of several dozen youths broke off and began pelting stones at the soldiers guarding a nearby Jewish holy site, witnesses said.

The soldiers responded with tear gas and concussion grenades.

One soldier was lightly injured by a stone, the army said.

The melee took place near Rachel's Tomb, the site where Jawarish, 9, was shot in the head by an Israeli soldier.

Some 600 mourners attended the funeral Sunday, carrying Jawarish's body from the family home to a graveyard behind Rachel's Tomb behind a contingent of Palestinian police and shouting slogans against Israel.

"Saddam, Saddam, our beloved, hit Tel Aviv," chanted some of the mourners, referring to the Iraqi president.

Even as the body, which was wrapped in a Palestinian flag with his face exposed and the bullet wound in the forehead visible, was being lowered into the grave, a group of youths began throwing stones at the nearby soldiers.

Adults and Palestinian officials on hand tried in vain to pull them back. Palestinian police did nothing to stop the



stone-throwing, witnesses said. Jawarish was in a coma for four days in hospital with severe brain damage before he died on Saturday, when his family agreed to allow donate his organs, undetermined that they could go to either Jews or Arabs.

"I gave the organs as a religious deed. It doesn't matter who the children are who received them, just as long as

they live," Jawarish's father Mohammad told journalists at the funeral before becoming overwhelmed by his tears.

"It is very hard for me to talk," he said. Jawarish's uncle, Talal, said, "If they were given to Jews, I hope they don't become soldiers and shoot someone else."

In the end, three Arab-Israeli children received the organs in operations performed in a hospital in Petach Tikva outside Tel Aviv.

A 14-year-old boy with cystic fibrosis received Jawarish's heart and two lungs, while an 11-year-old who suffered from a liver disease received the liver and kidney.

Doctors were still performing the transplant of the other kidney into a one-year-old bedouin infant, hospital officials said.

Cat seeks cat, sense of humour, fur, non-smoker

GERONA (AFP) — Cats looking for that special furry friend, or dogs pining for a canine cuddle, can now look up an animal dating agency set up in northern Spain. "Happy Animals" aims to bring cheer to the life of single pets, from cats to canaries, and positively encourages relationships to blossom sexually too, particularly for those pedigree clients. Like their human counterparts, animals wanting a companion must supply a photograph of themselves plus a few words on what they're looking for in a mate. Mari Carmen Melero, whose agency opens today in Gerona, said she didn't think there was another like it in the world. For the time being it's limited to cats, dogs and birds, but eventually happy animals could also take on snakes and other reptiles, she added.

Tabloid publishes picture to remind James Bond of affair

LONDON (AFP) — A 44-year-old Danish blonde has told the News of the World that she has had an affair with James Bond superstar Sean Connery for the past 12 months. Helle Bryn, who lives only a few yards from the star's Marbella beachside home in southern Spain, shattered the image of Connery as the loyal family man devoted to second wife Micheline to whom he has been married for 22 years. When the Sunday paper asked Connery about the affair the 67-year-old actor said: "I don't know what you're talking about." So it published a two column photograph of Helle and Connery outside his Spanish golf club, to remind him.

Barbie take-offs likely to enrage manufacturer

NEW YORK (AFP) — Author Sarah Strohmeyer's new book "Barbie Unbound" gleefully turns the popular doll's glamorous image on its head, in a send-up likely to enrage Barbie's manufacturer, Mattel. Strohmeyer introduces the world to such tongue-in-cheek Barbie take-offs as Teenage Pregnant Barbie, Welfare Queen Barbie, and Hot Flash Barbie. In her more elegant incarnations, Barbie is the planet's most popular doll, selling many millions the world over.

Former Cat Stevens performs in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Yousef Islam, the former British singer known in the 1960s as Cat Stevens, made one of his rare returns to the concert platform since converting to Islam in 1979. Wearing a white turban, he performed on Saturday night in Sarajevo to a crowd of 6,000 people, many of them young girls wearing the veil. Yousef Islam was quoted by the press as saying the suffering of the Muslim population during the war in Bosnia convinced him of the need to sing in public once again. The former Cat Stevens, 50, rejected the life of stardom when he converted to Islam. He now denounces the power of money in the showbiz world and sings only to promote the faith.

Italian hermaphrodite, aged five, becomes boy

TRIESTE (R) — Doctors in the north-eastern Italian city of Trieste said they had carried out an operation to turn a five-year-old child, born with some female and male sex organs, into a boy. "A variety of different factors were taken into consideration for the choice of which sex should prevail," said doctors Eberardo Chiella and Luigi Paduano. They said the child's chromosomes pointed to a preponderance of male characteristics.

Turkey, fending for own interests, declines open support for U.S. military action against Iraq

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey, fearing that a U.S.-Iraq war would delay the lifting of U.N. sanctions against Baghdad in the foreseeable future, has failed to openly support Washington, its closest NATO ally, in the latest stand-off with Iraq.

"War should be the last thing to be considered. Diplomatic ways should be used until the very last moment," Defence Minister Ismet Sezgin said, reflecting Turkey's unease over mounting tensions.

"Turkey has suffered too much after losing trade with Iraq following the Gulf war," Mr. Sezgin told reporters Saturday. "If there is another U.S.-Iraq war, Turkey will once again become one of the biggest sufferers."

Ankara, which staunchly backed the U.S. in the 1991 Gulf war, complains that it has lost more than \$35 billion because of severed trade ties with Iraq, Turkey's second-largest trading partner before the Gulf war.

Despite the partial resumption of oil shipments through a 1,000-kilometre pipeline as part of an "oil-for-food" deal between Baghdad and the U.N. last year, the link that used to carry nearly 100 million tonnes of Iraqi oil a year to the Mediterranean via Turkey is all but unused now.

Also, a multibillion-dollar protocol signed earlier this year between Ankara and Baghdad on Iraqi natural gas shipments to Turkey via a new pipeline is awaiting the

lifting of U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait.

In the security field, Turkey complains that a power vacuum in Iraq's Kurdish-dominated north since the Gulf war has helped separatist Turkish Kurds flourish in the area.

Despite several Turkish army incursions into northern Iraq to fight the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), Ankara has failed to prevent the rebels from using the area as a rear base for attacks against Turkish targets.

"Our security concerns stemming from the power vacuum in northern Iraq will be relieved if Baghdad regains control of the region," Turkish State Minister in the Foreign Ministry Sukru Gurel told a recent meeting here.

As the eastern-most NATO outpost, Turkey is a traditional ally of the U.S. and its interests require continued good ties with Washington.

One key question here is whether Turkey will allow the U.S. to use an allied airbase in the country's south for air raids against Iraqi targets in the event of war.

Nationalist Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said Saturday it would be up to the Turkish parliament to decide whether or not to let the U.S. use the Incirlik airbase for strikes against Iraq.

"If we receive a U.S. request for the use of Incirlik for offensive purposes, not the government but parliament will decide on such an

appeal," said Mr. Ecevit, showing his reservations in the matter.

Mr. Ecevit did not specify how the government would advise parliament to act in the event of a vote, but told reporters: "We have not received this kind of request from the United States."

However, Turkey has allowed the U.S. to reinforce its military presence at the base in the last two weeks, with Washington sending additional F-16 fighters and KC-135 tanker planes.

A U.S.-led multinational force extensively used Incirlik for air raids against Iraq during and after the 1991 Gulf war.

The base is currently home to nearly 50 British, Turkish and U.S. warplanes which enforce a "no-fly zone" for Baghdad aircraft over northern Iraq.

An opposition leader during the Gulf war, Mr. Ecevit who has personal ties with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had strongly objected to Ankara's military assistance of the multinational coalition that drove Iraq out of Kuwait.

But Turkey's powerful "military authorities, with their close links to the United States and Israel, will be careful enough not to adopt a pro-Saddam stance in the event of a confrontation, despite the presence of people like Ecevit in the government," political analyst Cengiz Candar said in an article in the Istanbul daily Sabah Sunday.

Palestinians reject Arafat, Netanyahu summit

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinian officials rejected Sunday a summit between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, saying the U.S. must first force Israel to make concessions in the deadlocked peace process.

"It is still too early to speak about a summit meeting. For that we would need to get over some of the sharp differences," President Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani told AFP.

Israel Radio said the U.S. is pushing for a Netanyahu-Arafat meeting, which would be their first since Oct. 8, after U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met last week with both leaders.

But Mr. Kanafani said the differences between the two sides were still too great, particularly over Palestinian demands that Mr. Netanyahu go ahead with long-promised troop withdrawals in the West Bank and call a halt to Jewish settlement construction.

"We would like any summit to live up to the expectations. A summit would require greater seriousness from all sides, especially the Americans" in pressing Israel to make concessions, Mr. Kanafani said.

Top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat is to meet Mr. Netanyahu aide Danny Naveh in the West Bank town of Jericho on Monday, Palestinian officials said without specifying what the agenda of the meeting would be.

Ms. Albright, who met with Mr. Netanyahu in London on Friday, said after talks with President Arafat in the Swiss city of Bern on Saturday that she saw the possibility of "openings" in the deadlocked peace process but she was unable to announce any progress after her meetings.

Mr. Arafat, who met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on Saturday, said the peace process was "at a dead end," while Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa warned, "time is running [out] quickly" to put it back on track.

Netanyahu tries to ease tension over 'who is a Jew' argument

INDIANAPOLIS (AFP) — Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu arrives here Sunday to lobby for continued financial aid from U.S. Jews to Israel and ease growing tension over the "who is a Jew" debate between Orthodox and Reform groups.

The Israeli leader, who held talks with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in London Friday, will not meet with U.S. President Bill Clinton during his three-day U.S. tour that will also take him to Los Angeles.

In Indianapolis Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu will address the annual meeting of the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF), an umbrella organisation for 200 U.S. and Canadian groups that raise an estimated \$30 million each year for Israel's social welfare programmes.

On Monday Israeli Labour Party chief Ehud Barak was also to appear before the CJF. President Clinton is scheduled to speak to the delegates via satellite Tuesday.

Late last month Reform and Orthodox Jews in Israel

suspended their court battle over who should control religious life in hopes of reaching a compromise that would head off a rift with American Jews.

A majority of the nearly six-million-strong Jewish community in the United States sides with the Reform movements, which are challenging the monopoly on conversions and other religious rites held by Orthodox rabbis.

Orthodox religious parties in Mr. Netanyahu's coalition government, however, want to enshrine their monopoly into law.

Several U.S. Jewish groups have threatened to cut off direct aid to mainstream welfare groups in Israel if the Orthodox faction gets its way.

"On certain days, I think that getting agreement on this issue from the various denominational rabbis is probably more difficult than making peace with the Palestinians," Mr. Netanyahu said in London Thursday.

Derek Penslar, an expert on modern Israeli history at Indiana University, predicted that Mr. Netanyahu would say that the situation

is different in Israel than it is in the United States.

"I expect he will justify his position on the Orthodox question and say something nice about Reform and Conservative Jews as well," he added.

Many U.S. Jews have also expressed concern over the growing intolerance between political left and right in Israel, as well as Mr. Netanyahu's hardline policies that have stalled the peace process with the Palestinians.

The Israeli leader may also be queried about polls showing that 62 per cent of Israelis favour the formation of a national unity government along with Mr. Barak's Labour Party.

On Monday, Mr. Netanyahu is to host a dinner in Los Angeles to raise funds for a Talmudic seminary established by Jewish settlers in Arab east Jerusalem.

The guest of honour at the gathering will be U.S. veteran actor Kirk Douglas, 81, who has long been a financier for construction of Jewish settlement in occupied Arab east Jerusalem.

MENA conference opens in Doha with Jordan, Qatar blasting Israel

(Continued from page 1)

blocking of the peace process.

"We're disappointed obviously that they're not here. They would have added quite a bit had they attended and had their private sectors attended," U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley said of the Saudi boycott.

"At the same time we are optimistic. We are extremely satisfied with the conference and the way it is going at the moment," he said.

A Qatari and U.S. firm signed a \$825 million deal for a petrochemical joint venture on the conference sidelines, while Qatar has drawn up a list of 25 projects it is promoting worth around two billion dollars (see story on page 9).

But, Mr. Daley said, "These are difficult times and it is in difficult times that it is important to continue on the path towards peace."

An agreement was also signed to give products from a Jordanian industrial zone the same duty free status in the U.S. market enjoyed by Israel.

Robert Pelletreau, former U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle East affairs, said the Arabs had told it like it was.

"I do not call it an attack but a true analysis of the actual situation," Mr. Pelletreau told Reuters, adding that Israel, the Palestinians and the U.S. must implement all agreements reached so far to give peacemaking credibility.

The Qatari emir said "with due respect to these positions... we wanted to prove to the world that we honour our international commitments," stressing that while Qatar does not allow itself to "outbid the nationalistic awareness" of

others, "we refuse the attempt of the others to overbid on our national awareness..."

In Cairo, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah on Sunday said he expected "nothing but failure" to emerge from the MENA conference.

"We do not expect anything but failure" from the conference, Sheikh Sabah told reporters here hours after the opening of the fourth regional economic conference in Doha.

"Our participation is the fruit of a political decision. There was never a decision not to go. There was no U.S. pressure or any other pressure on Kuwait," Sheikh Sabah said.

"The level of our participation did not please Qatar," he added, Kuwait has sent a low-level cabinet minister to Doha.

Syria reaffirms readiness for Israel talks

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria remains ready to resume peace talks with Israel, the number two of the ruling Baath Party, Abdullah Al Ahmar, said in a keynote speech Sunday.

He was standing in for President Hafez Al Assad in delivering the annual speech marking the anniversary of his 1970 accession to power.

It was one of the rare times the Syrian president had missed the celebrations marking the anniversary and had failed to deliver the commemorative speech broadcast on radio and television.

"The president would have liked to take part personally in your celebrations as it is his custom to do. But circumstances have prevented him from doing so," Mr. Ahmar

said. Syria's two vice-presidents, Abdul Halim Khaddam and Zouheir Masharqa, Prime Minister Mahmoud Al Zo'bi and Parliament Speaker Abdul Kader Kaddura were among those in attendance.

"Syria has said several times over that peace is a strategic choice," Mr. Ahmar told an audience of Syrian officials and Arab and foreign trade union leaders. "A just and comprehensive peace founded on international [United Nations] resolutions and on the principle of land-for-peace."

He said Syria was ready "to resume the peace negotiations [with Israel] at the point where they stopped" in February 1996.

The current Israeli government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refuses to resume the negotiations from that point.

It says it will not be bound by an undertaking given by the previous Labour-led Israeli administration to withdraw from the Golan Heights which it has occupied since 1967.

Mr. Ahmar condemned Mr. Netanyahu's policies, accusing him of "closing all doors to peace and so creating a danger which threatens the whole Middle East."

He also criticised the United States for its backing of Mr. Netanyahu and urged it to make "rapid and tangible efforts to promote its peace initiative" in the region.